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SERMONS

BY

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TO THE READER.

Mr. Colton has submitted to me the report of two discourses; and I take pleasure in certifying to the verbal accuracy with which he has reproduced them from my lips. In the revision, I have had occasion only to remove redundancies of expression, which were my own. These printed sermons may be relied upon, as being exactly what was pronounced from the pulpit; with only such verbal corrections, made by myself, as were necessary for the press.

B. M. PALMER.

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CONTENTS.

I—Job xxxvi, 17—Certainty and suddenness of God's wrath 3
II—Mat. xxvii, 5—Self-Immolation of Judas 13
III—Luke xxii, 12—Peter's Repentance 21
IV—Eph. iv, 30—Grieving the Spirit 36
V—John xxi, 17—Love to an Unseen Christ 49
VI—John xii, 27—Christ's Perturbation 65
VII—Prov. v, 22—Holden with the Cords of Sin 75
VIII—Prov. xviii, 14—The Wounded Spirit 87
IX—Acts xvii, 30, 31—Christ the Final Judge 101
X—II Peter iii, 18—Knowledge of Christ, essential to Holiness 113
XI—Mat. xi, 16, 17—Spirit of Contradiction in the treatment of the Gospel 123
XII—Psalm xxv, 14—The Secret of the Lord 135
XIII—I Tim. i, 15—The Faithful Saying 149
XIV—Acts xxvi, 28—The Almost Christian 165
XV—Rom. viii, 28—God s Grace in Providence 177
XVI—II Cor. v, 19—Reconciliation with God, in Christ 191
XVII—John xiv, 16—The Other Comforter 205
XVIII—John xiii, 7—The Darkness of Providence 217
XIX—Heb. xii, 2—Looking unto Jesus 231
XX—James ii, 12—The Law of Liberty 245
XXI—Rev. iii, 20—Communion with God, alone perfect 257
XXII—Eph. i, 13—The Sealing of the Spirit 261
XXIII—I John iv, 10—Law and Love 277
XXIV—Phil. iv, 19—God's Glory, the Measure of the Believers' Supply 291
XXV—Rom. viii, 37—Victory over Trials 303
XXVI—Rom. xiv, 12—Individual Responsibility in Religion 315
XXVII—Gal. vi, 7—Sin Alleged to be Punished only in this Life 327
XXVIII—Gal. vi, 7—Fixed Connection between Sin and Punishment 339
XXIX—II Cor. i, 20—Certainty of the Promises in Christ 349
XXX—John iv, 23, 24—Warrant and Nature of Public Worship, ... 361
XXXI—John xvii, 24—Christ's Prayer for His People 381
XXXII—John xvii, 24—Christ's Prayer for His People (continued) 393
XXXIII—John iv, 48—Signs in order to Faith 407
XXXIV—John i, 12—Adoption conferred by Christ 421
XXXV—Mat. xvi, 26—Value of the Soul 433
XXXVI—Phil. iv, 6—Antidote of Care 443
XXXVII—Heb. iv, 16—The Throne of Grace 457
XXXVIII—Luke x, 12—Doom of Sodom upon Unbelievers 467
XXXIX—Gal. v, 6—The Grandeur of Faith 479
XL—Ps. lxxxv, 10, 11—Harmony of God's Attributes in the Plan of Grace 493
XLI—John xii, 32—The Attraction of the Cross 505
XLII—I Cor. i, 26—Worldly Wisdom opposed to the Gospel 517
XLIII—John xi, 25, 26—Christ, the Resurrection and the Life 529
XLIV—Zech. vi, 12, 13—Christ, the Builder of the Church 541
XLV—Zech. vi, 12, 13—Christ, the Builder of the Church (continued) 555
XLVI—Eph. iv, 16—The Organic Unity of the Church 569
XLVII—I Thes. i, 3—Trinity of Graces 582
XLVIII—Psalm cxix, 10—Supreme Devotion in Religion 598
XLIX—II Cor. iv, 6—Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ 611
L—Job i, 21—Submission 621
LI—Psalm ix, 10—Trust in God's Name 631
LII—Heb. ii, 3—The Great Salvation 641

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I.

CERTAINTY AND SUDDENNESS OF GOD'S WRATH.

JOB XXXVI: 17.—*Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.*"

These words form a part of Elihu's address to Job, after his three friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, had failed to convict him of guilt. He falls, indeed into the same error with them in misapprehending the patriarch's true relation to God, and in supposing him to be under the divine condemnation: with this difference, however, that they construed the extraordinary sufferings of the Patriarch as punitive judgments, and as furnishing evidence that he was secretly an unusual sinner in the sight of God; whereas Elihu founds his judgment upon what he considers the proud and rebellious spirit of Job under his afflictions. His principle is sound, and, therefore in the progress of his discourse he lets fall many profound reflections upon the moral government of God; and his only error consists in the misapplication of these to the case of Job himself. Supposing, however, that his view of the Patriarch's character is correct, the argument which he presents for humiliation and repentance is exceedingly cogent: "because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."

The argument, you perceive, turns upon three points:

I. THAT THERE IS WRATH.

II. THE SUDDENNESS WITH WHICH THIS WRATH OVERTAKES THE TRANSGRESSOR.

III. THE HOPELESS RUIN INTO WHICH IT PLUNGES HIM.

Let us consider these in their order.

I. BECAUSE THERE IS WRATH. The term "wrath," in the scriptures is used with almost technical uniformity to denote God's righteous anger against sin, and the severe retribution with which sin will be visited hereafter. When we examine the scriptural representations of this wrath, there are four distinct elements which must be combined in any true or adequate conception of it.

1. *It is the indignation of God against sin drawn to its extremity.* In the original Hebrew, which, because it is a primitive language, has a material image in every word, which afterwards by analogy develops itself

into a secondary and tropical meaning, the word which is employed is exceedingly emphatic. In its ground-form it signifies to be hot; as though Jehovah were burning with indignation, which streams forth like molten lava against the transgressor. So in our own Saxon, the word wrath is identical with the word writhe, where the strength of a given emotion is tested by the contortions of the body which it creates: and those who have written upon the passions, define wrath as a violent and permanent anger, and they place it among the constant habitual affections of the soul, just like love or pity or benevolence. All the other terms with which it is interchanged in scripture, enforce the same idea. It is expressed sometimes by the word fury; as in the prophecy of Isaiah, you read thus: "Awake, awake, stand up, oh Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out." * * * "Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again." [Isaiah, li: 17, 22.] Then in the prophecy of Jeremiah: "Lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings." [Jeremiah, iv: 4]. The same Prophet says in another place: "For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me: 'take the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it.'" [Jeremiah, xxv: 15]. The Prophet Ezekiel says, in like manner: "And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy." [Ezekiel, xvi: 38]. In the Book of Revelation also: "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the lamb." [Revelation, xiv: 10]. And again: "And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." [Revelation, xvi: 19]. Superlatives, you perceive, are added to superlatives, as though human language was exhausted in the effort to express the energy of the thought. It is, so to speak, the anger of God brought to a white heat.

2. *God's wrath springs from the necessary opposition of his nature to sin.* God's character and his works, if described to us at all, must be described in human language; yet all the terms which we employ, are associated with ideas which we must carefully separate when we transfer those terms to God. For instance, the emotion of wrath, whenever experienced by us, is accompanied with turbulence and confusion of spirit, with disquietude and corruption of sentiment; and we cannot more effectually

separate all these associations from God, than by remembering that his wrath springs always from the necessary opposition of his holiness to sin. So that with God, wrath is not a simple emotion, dissipated in the very exhibition of it; nor is it simply the opposition of his will, which might be supposed to be arbitrary; but it is the necessary antagonism between his nature, as a perfectly holy being, and sin in every possible manifestation of it. God's wrath, therefore, is always constant and equal, however it may be intermittent in its display.

3. *God's wrath always takes the form of a judicial decision, and is rendered against those who have undergone a fair trial.* "He that believeth on the son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." [John, iii: 36]. To reject the Lord Jesus Christ, exposes the sinner to the pressure of this divine wrath. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, says: "For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. [Romans, i: 18]. And still further: "But unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile." [Romans, ii: 8, 9]. Now these passages all imply a standard of character and a rule of conduct, by which men are tried. In the beginning, when God first created us in his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, the race enjoyed a fair probation of law, through their representative and head, the first Adam; and then when man sinned and was brought under the curse, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." So that wherever the Gospel makes these offers of eternal life, there is also a trial of grace. The wrath of God, therefore, is not merely the indignation of a being, who in his essential nature is perfectly holy, but it is the indignation of a being who sustains to us the relation of a moral ruler and judge.

4. *This wrath vindicates all the divine perfections, and all the resources of infinite power and majesty are brought in to enforce it.* There can be no greater or more fatal fallacy than to separate between the attributes of God and bring them into collision with each other; as when we speak of God's mercy being against his justice, or his goodness arrayed against his truth. All these attributes are necessary to the perfection of his character, and they must all concur in our conception of God, just as the colors of the spectrum unite in forming the beautiful light which we behold. Though we may, for the purposes of science, separate that white light into

the respective rays which in their combination produce it; and though we may, in like manner, separate between the perfections of the Deity, in order that we may particularly examine this attribute or that attribute; yet it is the holiness of God expressing itself under different forms, and they are all equally necessary to him. It is an error, even in our imagination, when we single out particular attributes of God as being especially dear to himself; for example, when sometimes God's mercy is represented as being his darling attribute. Why, my hearers, the mercy of God is no dearer to the divine heart than his justice or his truth; and the fearfulness of that penalty which finally overtakes the sinner is that, when it is inflicted, all the attributes of God enter into it; and however these may be held in abeyance during the term of his patience and forbearance, they all equally leap forth from the bosom of the cloud and pursue the transgressor. Therefore when the sinner is at last banished from the presence of God, it is a decree pronounced just as much by the mercy of God, by the love of God, or by the goodness of God, as it is pronounced by his justice or his holiness or his truth. All these perfections, being equally expressed in the law, are equally committed to its guardianship; and in the day of final reckoning, when God discloses his wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, it will be found that all his resources of majesty, of power and of glory are brought forth to enforce the penalty.

Combine, then, these elements, and you have a scriptural conception of the wrath of God. Ah, how terrible is the wrath of a man simply because of the powers of thought, of feeling and of will, which he is able to throw into it. How much more terrible the wrath of God, when we consider the breadth and the depth of his infinite nature!

This leads us now to consider the second term of Elihu's argument:

II. THE SUDDENNESS WITH WHICH THIS WRATH DESCENDS UPON THE TRANSGRESSOR AT THE LAST. "Lest he take thee away with his stroke." As to this there are two things to be considered:

1. *This suddenness arises from the limit which God places upon his own patience, which is suddenly reached.* Just as there is a time appointed to man upon the earth, beyond which boundary he never shall pass, so is there allotted to every man a day of grace. To each just so many offers of mercy, and not one more—just so many warnings addressed to the conscience and to the fear, and then all warning ceases—just so many strivings of the Holy Spirit, and then that blessed agent wings his flight, saying as he goes, "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone!" In the majority of cases, through the reach of divine forbearance, this day of grace extends over the day of life and terminates at the moment of our departure from earth; but

in many other instances, the day of grace terminates long before the hour of death. Then the sinner is either permitted to drift away upon the current of his own appetites and passions, as a man is borne away upon the irresistible current of a stream; or else he is abandoned to some fatal delusion, which wraps him up in its folds and effectually blinds him against the light of truth; or else God gives him over to absolute indifference and unconcern, which is never, perhaps, broken, and may not be even disturbed. And what immensely aggravates the evil and the danger, is, that we approach that moment of our destiny without the slightest intimation of Providence; just as when a ship upon the broad ocean crosses the equatorial line which separates two hemispheres, the keel is actually upon and passes it before it is known, so the sinner drifts upon the current of life and comes unexpectedly up to the very moment of his destiny, when God's patience reaches the limit that his own sovereignty has assigned. When God lifts his hand in righteous anger and says "let him alone," though the sinner may be in the vigor of life, from the moment of the Spirit's desertion, he is hermetically sealed unto the damnation of Hell.

2. *In the next place, this suddenness is illustrated in the way in which death ordinarily approaches the wicked.* In some instances, how suddenly are they smitten down and pass into the eternal world without knowing the shock by which they were precipitated into it! Or if the conflict should be fierce between life and death, how often are those the moments of derangement and madness, when the reason is unshipped and man has no power whatever to give direction to his own thoughts! Or else, fierce pains rack the body, which effectually disable him from reflection, and he can only think of the torture which he endures and long for the repose which the grave will bring! Or else, these pains are lulled by opiates, which can bring ease to the body only by drugging the reason and the conscience, so that they are incapable of action! Or else, the natural love of life, and the aversion to thoughts of death, and the instinctive principle of hope, lead the man in his desperate illness to put off from him the unpleasant thought until the appalling moment when death is actually upon him, and he is destitute of power to spring aside! Or else God's Holy Spirit takes his flight; and the sinner though approaching his doom, is just as insensible to all that it imports to him as in the days of health and of gayety; and so he passes on in his apathy and in his indifference, only to have it broken by the actual experience of the doom upon which he enters beyond the grave. Ah, how true, in one or another of these forms, does the declaration of Elihu hold: "because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke."

III. THE THIRD TERM IN THE ARGUMENT IS THE HOPELESS RUIN INTO WHICH THE SINNER IS PLUNGED. "Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." It must be so if you consider:

1. *That this wrath does not expire by its own limitation.* If it were an arbitrary opposition of God to sin, it might be as arbitrarily abandoned: if it were a mere emotion into which the divine nature breaks forth, as we say, we might suppose that emotion to expend itself. But ah! if this wrath of God springs from the essential opposition of His very nature to sin, then there is the same reason for its continuance as for its commencement. As long as sin remains, so long must the opposition of God's nature to it abide; and therefore it is that, throug hall eternity, it must abide upon the transgressor when he is finally banished from God's presence and from the glory of his power.

2. *This wrath must be perpetual, because it is in the nature of a judicial decision.* It is rendered under the operation of strict law. The party upon whom that wrath is launched, has experienced a fair trial under law; which expresses its majesty, and enforces its authority, by pronouncing the sinner's doom. So long, therefore, as the law remains, the penalty which enforces it must abide; and there can be no change in the law, until there is a change in the character and nature of that God upon which it is founded.

3. *Again, this wrath must be perpetual, and the ruin into which it plunges the sinner hopeless, because there is nothing expiatory in the sufferings whtch he undergoes, and nothing which can possibly change his character.* The sophistry is strange, by which men come to think that there is anything expiatory in the sufferings which a wicked man endures. Why, if these are the necessary results of his own crime; must they not abide along with the crime itself? Given the continued existence of the cause, must you not have with it the continued existence of the effects. Given the abiding fountain, must you not have also the continuous outflow of its streams? There can be nothing in the sufferings experienced by the lost hereafter which can change their character, because in these they have a continued exhibition of the tremendous holiness of God, and every sight of that holiness but the more inflames their anger. Observe that this antagonism between holiness and sin, is reciprocal. It is not only true that God is opposed to sin and to the sinner, but it is equally true that the sinner is opposed to God and his holiness. It is not a whit more true that the holiness of God drives the sinner away into everlasting banishment, than it is true that the sinner, by the force of his own sinfulness, recedes from God and gravitates deeper and deeper into that pit which is

bottomless. The repulsion is mutual between the holiness that is in God and the sin that is in the transgressor; and in their mutual operation, they continue to widen the distance between God and the soul that is condemned. Every exhibition of the Divine Holiness only draws out the resentment of the sinner and fastens upon him that habit of feeling, and makes him more and more and more to the end a transgressor against the law. There is no help for the sinner when this wrath takes hold upon him, because there is nothing expiatory in the sufferings which he undergoes, and they have no sort of influence in softening or changing the character of the transgressor himself. Just because the soul sins on forever, forever turns away from God and from His Holiness, therefore it is that the wrath must continue to be poured upon it for these repeated transgressions forever and forever more.

4. *Then, lastly, this wrath must abide upon the transgressor because there is no dispensation of mercy beyond the grave.* How can there be? Is there any better sacrifice to be offered, than the one perfect sacrifice offered up once for all upon Calvary? Can there be found through all the universe, in heaven above or on the earth beneath, any other being superior to God's own Son when he took upon himself the form of a servant and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross? No, my hearers, God brought out from his own bosom his own Son, and offered him up freely for us all; and never, throughout all eternity, will he disparage the value of that atonement already made for sin, by one solitary offer of pardon to the transgressor grounded upon any other sacrifice. How perfectly true this declaration of Elihu in the text: "Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."

My hearers, there is no argument which ought to be more resistless, when addressed to the conscience of the sinner, than the argument of the text; and yet there is none against which the sinner braces himself with a stronger determination. It touches the depths of his pride; and he rises in that pride proclaiming even to God, that he will not be awed by any exhibition of His power into submission to His authority. For this reason, I have sought to-day to direct the argument, not to your fears, but to your reason. Avoiding the language of passion and all vehemence of speech, I have sought to address the appeal which Elihu makes in the text, to your calmest thoughts. A well constituted mind can take no pleasure in handling rashly the thunderbolts of the great Jehovah; and we instinctively recoil when a being, who is himself a sinner, feels competent to assume judicial functions and, in the name of the terrible God, to thunder his anathema against sinners like himself. Surely no man who has the love of his fellowmen at heart, can experience the faintest pleasure

in dwelling upon these hard aspects of the truth. It was an exact expression of this Christian sentiment when McCheyne, on one occasion, said to a brother who had preached upon the terrors of the law, "My brother did you preach them in love?" says the Great Apostle "by the terrors of the Lord we PERSUADE men." When faithfulness to God's truth brings me to these aspects of it, I never desire to dwell upon the details of God's wrath, or by the aid of human imagination to present them so before the mind, as to appeal simply to the instinct of fear. I desire rather, to address the great consideration to your honest reason and to your calm judgment. For oh! my impenitent hearers, the commonest prudence dictates to you to foresee danger, and if it exists, to provide against it; and it is only the spirit of utter recklessness that can induce any man to close his eyes against such as are real and actually impending. If there is a God, and that God be infinitely holy, it behooves me to know it and to propitiate His favor. If I am a sinner, lying justly under the condemnation of the law which I have broken, it is the climax of folly for me to ignore the reality of my guilt and the effect of my condemnation. If there be wrath, and that wrath be, as the text declares, remediless, it is a truth with which I am personally and practically concerned to the last degree. And yet I am no more concerned with all these immense propositions, than is every hearer who is listening to the sound of my voice. Why should you treat them as fictions? Why should you pass by these statements, in which your own personal destiny is involved, as though they were but the dreams of an enthusiast? That is all I have to say in reference to the matter. I ask you just to consider the doctrine of the text, and to consider it with the purpose to settle the points that are involved. If there be no God, why then drift on as you are going. If there be no law which will finally put its arrest upon you, and no day of judgment, and no throne before which you must stand, well then I suppose there is little better for a man to do than to eat and drink, to rise up and play, and enjoy the slight pleasures of this fleeting life as long as they last. If God be no Judge, and has no wrath which he will finally display against the guilty, then you can play with his terrors just as you play with the light of the sun and the air which you breathe around you. But oh, my hearers, if God will sit, in the person of his own Son, upon the Judgment Throne, and bring every soul before His bar, and pass npon every thought and upon every act and upon every word, so that no idle word that man hath spoken, shall escape the scrutiny of that day; then I affirm that the commonest prudence dictates to you that you shall adjust your quarrel with God, before the adversary takes you in hand to inflict the wrath which you have justly aroused. "Kiss the son, lest he be

angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.' [Psalms ii., 12.] "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." [Matthew v: 25, 26.]

And now, my dear unconverted friends, when that God who is so inexorable in his justice, has himself wrought out a perfect redemption, has laid our iniquities upon his own Son, has made him to be sin for us that knew no sin—shall it be said that you and I, who know it, who have known it all our lives, have known it only to despise God's forbearance and to reject his offers of mercy? And that, with the alternative placed before us, we have deliberately, through our own choice, made our own bed and drawn upon ourselves the vengeance of Divine wrath? Oh, you will be speechless, I warn you, at the last when you stand before that bar! Every mouth will be stopped, and the whole world will become guilty before God! For life and death were placed evenly before you, and you were a thousand times, by the word and by the Spirit who inspired the word, solicited to make a wise choice between the two; and you chose death rather than life, and made it your portion in eternity. "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."

The following lines from the pen of the late J. Addison Alexander, DD., touch with fearful solemnity the theme of the preceding Discourse, and are therefore appropriately appended.

THE DOOMED MAN.

I.

There is a time we know not when,
A point, we know not where,
That marks the destiny of man,
To glory or despair .

II.

There is a line, by us unseen,
That crosses every path,
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and His wrath.

III.

To pass that limit is to die,
To die as if by stealth ;
It does not quench the beaming eye,
Or pale the glow of health.

IV.

The conscience may be still at ease,
The spirits lithe and gay,
That which is pleasing still may please,
And care be thrust away ;

V.

But on that forehead God hath set
Indelibly his mark,
Unseen by man, for man as yet
Is blind and in the dark.

VI.

And yet the doomed man's path below,
Like Eden, may have bloomed,
He did not, does not, will not know,
Or feel that he is doomed.

VII.

He knows, he feels that all is well,
And every fear is calmed,
He lives, he dies, he wakes in hell.
Not only doomed but damned.

VIII.

Oh! where is this mysterious bourn
By which our path is crossed,
Beyond which God Himself hath sworn
That he who goes, is lost?

IX.

How long may we go on in sin?
How long will God forbear?
Where does hope end, and when begin
The confines of despair?

X.

An answer from the skies is sent,
"Ye who from God depart,
While it is called to-day, repent,
And harden not your heart."

II.

SELF-IMMOLATION OF JUDAS.

MATTHEW XXVII: 5.—"*And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.*"

These words record the tragic end of him who betrayed his master with a kiss. You know the whole sad story: how that he, who was a devil from the beginning, attached himself to the school of Christ; and for a period of three years, under the mask of eternal piety, deceived all but one. Ah! ye who disparage the church because of the unworthiness of some of its members, have you forgotten the parable of the net, which, when cast into the sea, "gathers of every kind," both good and bad; the good to be gathered into vessels and the bad to be cast away? or have ye forgotten the parable of the tares, which, according to the direction of the master, must grow together with the wheat until the harvest; when the reapers shall separate between the two, and gather the tares into bundles to be burnt? The announcement of all this by Christ himself, whilst it is a word of solemn warning to the church, anticipates your objection, and makes your criticism a confirmation of that gospel which you seek to evade. But if this be not sufficient, bear in mind that in the little circle immediately around the person of the Lord Jesus on earth, the twelfth man was a devil! and yet with the Lord's eye fixed upon him, he was not separated from that circle until the critical moment arrived. So must it be with the visible church in her imperfection, until the angels shall separate between the righteous and the wicked, and the two shall take their respective places upon either side of the Judge.

It is rather a striking illustration of that divine Providence which so appoints to every man his lot as to bring out and to test all the points in his character, that he who was to fall by his covetousness was the only Apostle, during the Lord's personal ministry upon earth, exalted to an office of trust. He before whose greedy eyes glittered the seductive bribe of the silver, bore the bag. Judas was the bursar of the apostolic college, providing for the slender wants, or else dispensing the still more slender charities, of those poor fishermen. Be sure of it that every man who

wants to sin will have an opportunity; nor will he be hindered, by the imposition of any unusual restraints, from accomplishing his ruin.

What particular motive led this hypocrite to become a disciple of Christ we do not exactly know. Possibly it may have been a case, in the first instance, of powerful self-deception: truth bearing superficially upon the mind, but not controlling the affections of the heart. Like the seed, in the parable of the sower, which "falls in stony places, where it has not much earth, and forthwith it springeth up because it has no deepness of earth, and when the sun is up it is scorched; and because it hath no root it withers away." Or, what is still more probable, being, in his very character, cold, calculating and unscrupulous, Judas anticipated brilliant fortunes under this super-natural personage, who was gifted with such miraculous powers. But as these hopes gave way to a sickening disappointment, from the growing opposition of the Jewish Nation and from Christ's own prophetic intimations of his approaching death, he becomes estranged from his Lord; until at length the dark thought creeps into his heart, to profit by his Master's fall. Slowly, perhaps, that thought matured into a purpose; and guilty plans were revolved, founded upon his knowledge of his Master's personal habits and places of retirement, by which quietly to effect his betrayal. The unholy compact is sealed with the rulers of the Jewish people, and the price of blood is counted into his hands, piece by piece; it being one mark of the Lord's humiliation upon the earth, that his life should be held precisely at the valuation of a Hebrew slave.* But when the atrocious deed is accomplished, horror fills his soul, and in the desperation of his remorse he casts down the fatal bribe in the courts of the temple, and hangs himself from the rocks overlooking the valley of the Jehoshaphat.

My hearers, there are many solemn contrasts in the narratives of the Bible, but none is more appalling than this self-immolation of despair, as it stands side by side with that sacrifice by which a world was redeemed from guilt. The death of Judas has been well represented as a grim travesty of the atonement itself—the dark foil which by the power of contrast, more vividly represents the glories of Christ's redeeming love—Satan himself appearing by the very side of our blessed Lord, when engaged in his most stupendous work of mercy; and there, in the person of the despairing suicide, caricaturing the great atonement itself, and representing to the world what is hell's conception of satisfaction for guilt and sin. Let us, this morning, stand in the presence of this great contrast between these two deaths, and gather up the lessons which he may learn from the despair and doom of the suicide.

*See Exodus, 21, 22.

I. *In the first place, these two deaths, that of Jesus and that of Judas, though under different aspects, both teach the eternal and necessary connection between sin and death.* Observe that each of these is an impersonation: the one, an impersonation of perfect sinlessness; the other, of finished depravity. The Lord Jesus Christ was thrice affirmed by audible voice from Heaven, when the Father proclaimed him his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased. The officers who were sent to arrest him, returned with their mission unfulfilled, utterly confounded by the wisdom of him who spake as never man spake. The crafty dialecticians who sought to entrap him in his talk, were foiled in their subtlety, and could not betray him into a solitary indiscretion. Even Pilate's wife sent a message to her husband upon the seat of judgment, saying: "Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day, in a dream, because of Him."—[Matthew, xxvii, 19]. And Pilate himself, when he delivers him over to his murderers, vainly seeks to wash his hands of blame, and affirms his innocence. And now, last of all, the guilty traitor himself throws down the price of blood, as it burned in the palms of his hands, exclaiming: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." Through his whole career, the Lord Jesus never recalled a single word: never regretted a single act: wept, indeed, tears of sadness, but never of repentance; nor did memory ever cast upon the canvass the spectre of a single fault.

Now, my hearers, upon what principle of equity or of law, under a government perfectly holy like that of God, came this sinless innocent to die? You and I are obliged to pause before this stupendous fact. The explanation, that he was hurried to his death by human violence, and that it is to be reckoned among the casualties which occur in human history, is altogether superficial and insufficient; for whatever the instrumental agency by which the death of Christ was accomplished, it occurred under the just and holy and superintending providence and government of Almighty God—a government so righteous and so true in reference to our race that it has never, in a single instance, relaxed the principle that no one should ever die, except under the operation of the curse. And of this man, is it not distinctly recorded, that he "was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" to this very death? Why he was the only member of the human race of whom it can be said, that he was expressly born to die. Death is indeed our lot; but it has supervened upon our original condition, having surreptitiously crept in through sin; but of Jesus it was affirmed in ancient prophecy, that a body was prepared him. "Sacrifice and offerings thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me,"—[Hebrews, xi: 5,] that in the body thus prepared, he

might offer himself up to death, a sacrifice for the guilty. It is a tremendous fact, and the only one of the kind that has occurred in the entire history of the human race; the death of one perfectly sinless and perfectly innocent: and the only solution of it is, that he stood in the place of the guilty. He was "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law;" as the same Apostle expresses it elsewhere, "That through Death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."—[Hebrews, ii: 14, 15]. "For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."—[II Corinthians, v: 21]. Can anything be more impressive? His connection with sin, purely external as it was, and subsisting only through the law, by which it was reckoned to his account, nevertheless ensured his death.

Now look at the other scene. Judas is left to work out his sin without impediment or restraint, until it is finished; and then he rushes upon his doom. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed; then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." [James, i: 13, 14, 15.] Here, then, is the contrast—Judas hanging by his own rash act over the valley of Hinnom, itself the Hebrew picture of hell; and the Lord Jesus hanging upon the accursed tree, bearing our sins in his own body! Sin actual, on the one hand; sin imputed, on the other; but both leading to death. It is the judgment, then, declared alike by man and by God; it is the testimony both of nature and of grace; "the wages of sin is death."

II. *In the next place, observe in Judas the power of conscience to sleep, and let the sinner sin on; and then the power of conscience to awake and avenge.* I know not which of the two is the more terrible; but we may not disjoin them, for they are both parts of one complex fact. The power of conscience to sleep! Why look through the history of Judas, and see how his conscience slept under the splendor of Christ's miracles, those signs and wonders by which he was proved to be the son of God, with power! how it slept under Christ's public discourses, which, because they were words of grace, moved the hearts of the common people that heard him gladly! how it slept under the more intimate, confidential and affectionate conversations of the master with his disciples in private, when he expounded to them his own dark sayings and initiated them into all the mysteries of his kingdom! How it slept, when the fatal thought of betraying his Lord

first threw its shadow upon his soul; and while he was brooding guiltily over the plans to accomplish it! How it slept even at the supper, though Christ, with unutterable pathos, said in the presence of the twelve, "verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." Yea, so profoundly did it sleep, that, with an audacity that is absolutely fearful, the traitor could look that master in the eye, and challenge him with the question "Lord, is it I?" It slept when, in the darkness of the night, he walked amidst the shades and the memories of the Garden of Gethsemane! Nor did it flutter, even when he profaned his master's cheek with the kiss of treachery! But oh! It awoke, when the dreadful deed was done; and it awoke, with the sting of a thousand scorpions. Sinner, young or old, it is a fearful thought, this power which conscience has to go to sleep; to lift up no voice of warning as you press forward in your course of sin until you reach its climax! Like a secret detective, always dogging your steps upon the path behind you, making a note upon his record of every transgression, and tabling the fearful accusations against you at the bar of judgment; but never uttering the word of solemn arrest until the sin is finished and you awake to your doom! And then consider, along with this, the fearful power of the conscience to awake! And when it awakes, to awake as a tormentor forever, becoming through all eternity "the worm that shall never die."

III. *But this leads me, in the third place, to speak of the intolerable anguish of remorse, under which Judas fled from life.* And that, too, in a world of hope, where God puts a veil over the face of his throne, and justice hides her bolts, and the earth is wreathed with the smiles of its Creator; where every sound in nature, whether of Providence or of grace, is a call of mercy, bidding the sinner turn and live, for God has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. If the anguish be such in this world, which is a world of hope, what will it be in the great hereafter, in that world which is built for justice, and where retribution shall measure out the exact reward to guilt? Oh, Judas, if thou could'st but *die!* But to live in an endless dying! To be forever expiring in the pangs of death, yet live only still to die! And this thou did'st covet, to find a refuge from thyself! Remorse—what is it but the hideous caricature of repentance? This, born of heaven, looks ever heavenward, bright with its hope and peace; but that looketh downward to the hell from whence it sprung, dark and terrible as the woe to which it points. Remorse! How the word broke from the lips of the dying Statesman, who, as he lay upon his bed, asked a friend to bring a dictionary, and look out for him the word remorse and repeat the definition; then, dissatisfied with this, had it written upon a card

and held up before his eyes, and with his sharp, incisive tones, that grew weaker and weaker in death, exclaimed, in the bitterness of his spirit, "Remorse! Remorse!! Remorse!!!" Oh! How great must be the power of guilt over the human conscience, and how intolerable the remorse which it awakes, when a man of his own choice escapes from the only conditions of thought and life of which he has any knowledge, and seeks a refuge even among the dismal realities of the world of despair to which he hastes.

IV. *Last of all, observe in this story of Judas that power of judgment in the conscience, which anticipated punishment as an atonement to law for its transgression.* Our human courts are full of cases where men have carried through many years a guilty secret; until at length, under the pressure of conscience, they impeach themselves and make a last atonement for crime in a voluntary surrender to punishment. Oh! that eternal sense of justice which God has imbedded in the deep foundations of the human soul, which no sophistry can eliminate and no resistance can overcome! It is a grand, but, at the same time, an awful thought, that man is made in the image of his God: our mind answering to the wisdom and intelligence that is in God, the dim reflection of it; our hearts answering to the affections that are in God, the faint shadow of them; our conscience responding to the holiness and rectitude of God; and our will, the mighty power which resolves and executes, reflecting, as the shadow reflects the substance, the tremendous omnipotence and supremacy of Jehovah. It is the glorious dignity of man, in consequence of which he was well appointed to be ruler over the creatures, that he should stand with an erect form, and, in the full complement of spiritual faculties, represent the image of God upon the earth. And among these features of resemblance between man and his Creator, is that sense of justice which God has built into the very nature of the soul, and which responds to the eternal, inflexible, inexorable justice with which God administers his government over angels and over men. This sense of justice is for a comfort to God's holy ones in their hours of oppression and wrong, and sustains them when they suffer. It is this sense of justice which gives them their place under the altar, from which they lift up their pathetic appeal, "How long, oh Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth." [Rev. 6: 10.]

It is this sense of justice, which, in the soul of the sinner, pronounces the sentence of self-condemation; and makes him appeal to the very bar before which he is at last to stand, asserting the supremacy of law, and proclaiming the necessity of everlasting punishment. You have a clear illustration of it in the case of Judas, who vainly sought to make a human

satisfaction for his crime by the restitution of the thirty shekels of silver; and when this failed, sought to appease the wrath of his own conscience by a voluntary surrender of himself to death, making thus a vain atonement for his transgression of the law of God. Thus does Judas, in his suicide, disclose most fully the self-destructive nature of sin; and thus does he become a type of that eternal self-condemnation which will rest upon the soul hereafter forever in its woe. Oh, the power which guilt has over the human conscience! when a man even finds a refuge from that conscience in hell itself! As Milton puts it into the mouth of the great adversary:

> "Me miserable! which way shall I fly
> Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
> Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
> And, in the lowest deep a lower deep,
> Still threatening to devour me, opens wide,
> To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven."

Men may flout, if they will, the doctrine of a judgment and the stern necessity of justice to banish the sinner at last from the presence of God, and from the glory of his power. But there is the sentiment of that justice in every human soul, which clamors for punishment, and, by self-surrender to that punishment, seeks to make a vain atonement for sins; and this sense of justice, ever resting with increasing weight upon the human conscience, will make the sinner, through all eternity, elect his own Hell; that in the steep descent from the lowest deeps to deeps that are yet lower,—those deeps which are to these present deeps as Hell to Heaven, he may find a way to escape from God, from his terrible justice and holiness and truth; seeking, by these passionate sufferings, to appease the clamors of an accusing conscience, and to satisfy the everlasting demands of this sense of justice in his own soul.

This lesson of the death of Judas impresses two reflections upon us. You see all that nature can teach, and can do, when it undertakes to deal with the mighty problem of sin. Remove the Gospel, take the cross out of the world, blot out this Bible which speaks of redemption, and of pardon and of eternal life through Jesus Christ; and let a man, under the exasperation of conscience and under the torture of his guilt, manage this mighty problem of sin, and the final result is the death of the suicide. The only atonement that man can make for sin, is just to rush upon his doom, and by the voluntary anticipation of it, go before and go ahead of the decree and the wrath of God itself; to invoke the inflictions of eternal justice upon his own head by the self-assumption of all its fearful terrors. Consider, then, these two pictures, the death of Judas and the death of

Jesus; and then penitently come, and lay your sins upon him who has borne them in his own body. Make the exchange; part with all the terrors of conscience and the fears of perdition, and accept, instead, his justfying righteousness, which shall fill the heart with joy and peace forever.

And then you have illustrated, in the death of Judas, the great distinction between remorse and repentance—repentance, the godly sorrow that is produced by the exhibition of God's love, the sorrow that springs out of the very pardon that blots the sin away forever; but remorse the holding on to sin as with chains of steel, and then turning the penalty of the law in upon the conscience, that by the pangs which are felt it may possibly express its regret for the crime. We have, in this scene, a complete exhition of what sin accomplishes when it reaches its result. "The wages of sin is death." "The soul that sinneth it shall die." It is the eternal connection between sin and death, unless that connection be broken by him who died that we might live forever.

III.

PETER'S REPENTANCE.

LUKE XXII, 62:—"*And Peter went out and wept bitterly.*"

We stood, last Sabbath, before one of those impressive contrasts found in sacred story: that between the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, and the despairing suicide of Judas. I once heard the sentiment from a distinguished civilian, that "there is no great working idea in history which does not carry its own caricature along with it;" and the longer you reflect upon the statement, the more numerous will be the illustrations arising before you to confirm it. It is not strange, therefore, when heaven stooped to earth to work out the great problem of salvation by grace, that hell should rise up from beneath and mock it with its grimace. It was, too, the very climax of the great struggle between the serpent and the woman's seed; in which, according to the terms of the first prophecy, the head of the one should be crushed, and the heel of the other should be bruised. It was pertinent, therefore, to the character of the struggle that the devil should appear by the side of the Redeemer, with the horrid travesty of the gracious atonement itself. It was a fitting contrast, in this critical moment of the world's history, that hell should stand over against heaven, and reveal its dismal conception of what is the true satisfaction for the sins of the guilty. This, precisely, is the startling feature of the death of Judas; which, with all of its suggestions, I have already presented to you. We stand, to-day, in the presence of another contrast, hard by in the sacred narrative, between the remorse of Judas and the repentance of Peter; and if the lesson of the last Sabbath was full of solemn warning to those who persist in a course of sin, this, to-day, is full of instruction and comfort to those who are brought to mourning and repentance for the same.

I.—OBSERVE, THEN, HOW NEAR THE SIN OF PETER COMES TO THAT OF JUDAS: just as near, in fact, as one in a state of grace can approach to the thorough reprobate; whilst there are features in the case

of Peter, even darker than those which are found in that of Judas, inexpressibly deepening the shade of his guilt.

1 *Peter, like Judas, surrenders his Lord to his foes:* not so actively, indeed, but in a way rather negative and passive. Peter *denied* his master, Judas *betrayed* him. Peter simply abandoned him to the fate which the other had procured. But oh! how nearly does the edge of the one crime touch that of the other! Peter certainly, for the moment, gave perhaps a constrained consent to the surrender of his Lord. Even in human ethics, the desertion of a friend, at the very moment he stands in need of our aid, is a virtual betrayal; and were it not for the light cast upon this act later in the story, we should never be able to determine how narrow is the interval which separates between these two crimes. Ah! fellow Christians, there are circumstances into which you and I are thrown, in the providence of God, when our testimony for Christ is so imperative, that the very suppression of it is virtually a denial; and that denial may be so aggravated as to be potentially a betrayal. It makes one shudder to think how near, in our folly and in our blindness, we may graze the edge of apostacy itself.

2 *The sin of Peter and of Judas was the act of an intimate and confidential friend.* Friendship between man and man, especially when it is intimate and confiding, is of the nature of a covenant: not written, indeed, upon parchment, nor sealed before a notary; but all the more sacred because it is tacit, and bound under the sanctions of the most delicate honor. If one in life opens to me the folds of his heart, allowing me to read his secret thoughts and desires, he binds me to him with chains of steel; and if that confidence be reciprocal, the two are held together in a sacred compact, which, if it cannot be pleaded before a human court, certainly stands in the high chancery of heaven; and its obligations can never be broken without danger and guilt. Even in the judgment of mankind, all perverted and dark as it is, a human friendship is never ruptured, but the persons and the secrets of the two are to be held forever sacred to each. Now bring this principle to bear upon the case of Judas, and see how exceedingly dark is his crime. By voluntary act he came into the school of Christ; was admitted, just as freely as his other colleagues, to his Master's person; walked side by side with him, through all the journeys in Samaria, in Galilee and in Judea; witnessed the splendid miracles that he performed; heard his marvellous discourses; and then in private listened to those secret expositions of his doctrine and of his kingdom, which were made to the twelve in common. Nay, this man, of all the twelve, enjoyed so the confidence of his fellows that

he alone bore the common purse. There is not a trace, in all the narrative, of any discrimination against him made by Christ; nor that he breathed into the ears of the other disciples a solitary suspicion of his integrity. True, Christ was not deceived in him. From the beginning, he knew that he was a devil and he that should betray him; yet he made no sign of that secret knowledge, either to Judas or to the eleven. So that Judas, by the law of human friendship, was bound by the most sacred obligation to his person and cause. In the forty-first psalm, the Messiah is represented as prophetically exclaiming, "yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me!" which, in the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of John, is carried over and specially applied to the case of Judas. How dark the crime, then, of this man! enjoying thus the open confidence of his master, acquainted with all his personal habits and places of retirement, that he should betray him for gold!

In the case of Peter, the matter is even worse: for, like Judas, not only was he in free intercourse with his Lord, but Peter, James and John were selected out of the twelve to be honored with the special tokens of Christ's confidence and esteem. These three were separated from all the rest sometimes to witness a splendid miracle; as, for example, when Christ raised from the dead the damsel, of whom he said, "she sleepeth." These three, Peter, James and John, beheld his transfiguration upon the mountain; and Peter, with his characteristic boldness exclaimed, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." [Matthew xvii, 4.] When the eleven went sorrowfully behind the master into the garden of Gethsemane, lo, these three are again separated from the rest, to go deeper into the darkness of the Lord's anguish; who said unto them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and removing but a little space, His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground! And it was Peter, after his memorable confession, upon whom the Lord pronounced that splendid benediction, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven: and I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." [Matthew xvi, 17, 18, 19.] I will not pause to discuss how far this remarkable language is addressed to

Peter as an individual, or as the representative of the whole college to which he belonged; for, in either case, it was a singular token of his master's esteem and confidence. Now, my hearers, is it to be told in the sad story, that this apostle, of all the eleven, shall be the one with oaths and curses to deny his Lord? Surely, the obligations of friendship were violated by Peter in an extraordinary degree; by reason of the fact that he, beyond the rest, was honored with the Redeemer's confidence and affection.

3. *This denial by Peter occurred immediately after the supper, and after witnessing the agony of Christ in the garden.* You remember Peter's prominence in these solemn transactions; how, when Jesus arose from the Passover, the last that was rightfully celebrated on earth, to wash his disciples' feet, Peter impetuously recoiled from this act of condescension; and then, under Christ's rebuke, how in the exuberance of his love, he swung to the other extreme, exclaiming, "Lord, not my feet only, but my hands and my head." And when the solemn announcement had been made at the table, "verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me," and the question had gone around the circle, "Lord, is it I?" was it not that same Peter who beckoned to the disciple that leaned upon Christ's bosom, to ask of whom it was he thus spake? At that holy supper, which ever since has been commemorated in the Church of God, and at which we are so often privileged to sit—where, for the first time, those memorable words were pronounced, "this is my body which is given for you * * * * this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins;" there did Peter eat of that bread and drink of that cup: there did he proclaim his oneness with the Lord in body, soul and spirit; and there did he pledge his honest service, until he should be caught up to the reward of the glory hereafter. And now is it to be said, that within a few hours after that blessed sacrament, before the crowing of the cock should herald the dawn of another day, all the sweet influences of that precious ordinance had faded from the Apostle's heart? That he could go from the bread and the wine, and from the solemn sealing of his allegiance to his blessed Lord, into the presence of His foes, and deny that he even so much as knew the man? Even this is not the worst. Peter, James and John, a little apart from the other eight, beheld the anguish of Christ's soul when it was poured out as water within him, under the pressure of his Father's curse; and yet, after what may be termed the sacrament of that solemn and impressive scene, and almost within a single hour, does this Peter openly proclaim that he did not even

so much as know the man. Ah! if we are obliged to admit that there is aggravation to sin from the circumstances under which it is committed, we find that aggravation here; and with it a darkness in the guilt of Peter that no language can possibly describe.

There is, perhaps, a psychological reason for these fluctuations, upon which I may just touch for a moment: our emotions are not constant, but variable. Nay, it is the mark of weakness impressed upon man, as a creature, that in no department of his nature is he capable of sustained exertion. The body gives way to the weariness of fatigue; and there comes, after exertion, an entire relaxation of every muscle and of every sinew, in those moments of repose in which we recuperate for future toil. The mind, great as it is, is not capable of constant tension. It leaps grandly to some of its achievements, and then there comes a necessary and instantaneous pause of all its activity. Much more may this be said of our emotional nature; which, just like the tide of the ocean, has its flow and its ebb. In this world of toil and care we are incapable of the constant friction either of thought or feeling: the very sharpness of the sword would cut through, and wear out, its scabbard. Now, it is in these pauses of our spiritual activity—it is in these moments of reaction from strong feeling, which are necessarily moments of exhaustion and of weakness, by reason of the previous expenditure of force—it is in these moments that we are most exposed to temptation. The great adversary, from his intimate knowledge of the human frame, perceives his opportunity. He knows no instant is so favorable for his purpose of temptation and attack, as when we are relaxing from exertion, when the flood of feeling is upon the turn of the tide, or is at its lowest ebb. He comes upon us in these moments of relaxation with his most terrific suggestions: and hence the paradoxical fact, that the moments of most frightful temptation are immediately after the highest religious and spiritual enjoyment. But this is not the place to enlarge upon thoughts like these. There is another reason still more distinctly to be recognized: the excitement of religious feeling is so exhilarating in its nature that, in the bewilderment of our joy, we can form no conception of ever being in any other state. Thus it comes to pass that we relax our watchfulness; and, in the self-confidence of our joy, become an easy prey to the adversary, when he springs upon us like a panther. Let us bear in mind that the moments of gravest spiritual peril, when we are most exposed to the wiles of the devil, are the moments when we come out of high communion with God, and have enjoyed the largest experience of his love. So it was that Peter came from the Lord's table, and from

observing the Lord's anguish in Gethsemane, to stand in the vestibule of the High Priest's palace and, under the challenge of a girl, deny the Lord whom he had professed to love!

4. *Peter's denial was in the face of his own protestations to the contrary, and of Christ's recent and explicit warning.* "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me." [Luke xxii, 31-34.] Or, as Matthew puts it, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. Peter answered and said unto him, though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." In his self-confidence, Peter replies, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples." [Matthew xxvi, 31-35.] Forewarned, forearmed, is the common adage among us. The very warning is an appeal to the principle of self protection in man's nature, which is aroused from sleep and put upon its guard against the impending peril. How much more when that warning is circumstantial, like the warning of Christ, designating the time, and all the circumstances, and the very agent by whom that temptation should occur! And yet, in the face of all this warning, and of his own solemn protestations, Peter, in his forgetfulness and in his fear, fulfils his Lord's predictions. Ah! Peter, walking behind the crowd that was hustling the Lord to the mockery of his trial, did it not occur to thee that thou wast going into the very presence of thy peril? Did not the warning from the Master's lips, but a few hours before, revolve before thy mind—"this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice?" There are, if you will take the trouble to compare the statements of the three evangelists, one or two features in regard to this warning worthy of notice. Mark mentions Christ's words as being, "This day, even in this night, before the cock crow *twice*, thou shalt deny me thrice;" in that particular differing from the statements of Matthew and of Luke. Mark goes on to say that when Peter had uttered his first denial, the cock crew. Shall not the crowing of that cock, being the initial fulfilment of the Master's prophecy, bring to mind the Master's warning? And, under the very sound

of that crowing, which is the renewal of the Lord's prophecy to him, shall not Peter pause in his fall and recover his steadfastness? But he goes on in his fatal forgetfulness of it, until the rebuking eye of Jesus falling upon him brings it to his remembrance.

5. *Peter's denial was aggravated by repetition:* and at each repetition he contracted deeper guilt. First of all, there is the square falsehood, "I know not the man." Then, as Mark puts it, there is a second denial, with perjury; for with an *oath* he said the second time, "I know not the man." And then, under the third challenge, the third denial comes with dreadful imprecations and curses—"He began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak." And here, too, as one of the evangelists notes the fact, there is a circumstance which aggravates Peter's guilt in the repetition of his crime. An interval of an hour was, in the gracious providence of God, allowed to intervene between the second denial and the third. How strange! By what law of human thought shall we explain it? How strange, that in this hour Peter should not recover himself! That he should not remember his Master's prediction, already partially fulfilled, and needing but a single denial more in order to be wholly verified! And with the sound of the crowing in his ear, how comes it to pass that, by the law of association, Peter does not recover his footing and go from the place of peril, and escape the third and last denial, which was the most terrific of the three? Ah! this fatal consistency of sin! The first always the mother of the second; and the two, the father and mother of the third; and so sin, with its fearful fecundity, breeds sin! God, in his solemn jurisprudence, absolutely, here in this world of probation, punishes the transgressor by giving him up to sin again and again and again, and to plunge deeper and deeper into the pit which is bottomless. The terrors even of that pit are not so terrible to me as this great law of sin here upon earth: where the man who sins is allowed by God to sin again; and these sins combining, produce other sins, linking on like the links of a chain, until he is bound like a captive unto the doom which he is to experience hereafter.

6. *This sin of Peter was committed in the very presence and hearing of the Lord* All the transactions of that trial were evidently open to his gaze. He could look through the colonnades of the Palace, and there upon the upper dais or platform, where the Council was assembled, he could witness and hear it all; for in the midst of that trial, the Lord cast his look upon Peter, and Peter was near enough to see the glance of his eye and the rebuke which it conveyed. And what did he see?

The whole Council baffled, when they had tabled charges of blasphemy against Christ, by inability to adduce the proof; until, in their exigency, two witnesses volunteer to testify that they had heard him say "I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days." What did he hear? The solemn tones of the high priest as, from the bench, he adjures the prisoner at his bar, by the living God, to say whether indeed he was the Christ, the Son of God; and the answering words of Christ, "Thou hast said, nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven." What did he see? The High Priest and the whole Council rising up in the fury of their rage, and rending their garments, and exclaiming, "What need have we of witnesses? ye have heard his blasphemy:" and then, as the exhibition of anger always infuriates it, and man lashes himself into rage and into passion, lo! these men gather around the person of the Savior, and spit in his face, and buffet him with their hands, and with reeds smite those patient shoulders—the shoulders of Him who was, in that hour, bearing our reproach! Oh, where was Peter's generosity gone? Whither has fled the bold courage which in the garden drew the sword to do battle against the band of traitors? Why does he not now feel the indignity to Christ, and rise, if not for his rescue, to stand at least in manly sympathy at his side? And shall it be this generous, confiding, loving Peter who, when the crown of thorns is placed by the mockers upon his Master's brow, shall thrust this thorn into his Master's heart of an open and profane denial of him? Surely, he was bound by the law of humanity, if not by the more stringent law of honest friendship, to have brought his sympathy to Christ in the hour of his woe; and it was an act of consummate baseness to select this, of all the hours, to pierce his heart with this keener reproach.

II.—YET WITH ALL THESE AGGRAVATIONS, THE SIN OF PETER MUST BE DISCRIMINATED FROM THAT OF JUDAS.

1.—*For example, Peter's sin was sudden, under strong temptation; while the sin of Judas was deliberate and long premeditated.* I have exasperated you against the sinning Peter by dwelling upon these aggravations of his fault. My brethren, let us draw around the erring Apostle and drop upon him the tear of our pity. Did it never happen to any of you in life to be suddenly dropped down into the bosom of a profane and scoffing crowd, and hear your religion derided? Did you never feel at such a moment the cold freeze coming over your affections, like

the thin ice forming over the surface of the river, congealing all the affections of your heart, so that you became cold and hard, like the rest, for the time? Then understand how this disciple, surrounded by this crowd of scoffers, should, when the sudden challenge is pronounced in his ear, meet it with an equally sudden, unpremeditated denial of his Lord. Then consider, along with this, his bewilderment and utter confusion of spirit. Up to the very moment when the person of Christ was seized Peter, and the rest, probably, indulged the hope that by his divine power, he would rescue himself from danger. Could not he, who, when he was about to be thrown headlong from the brow of the hill at Nazareth, suddenly disappeared and made his way unseen through the crowd—could not he, amidst the solemn shades of the trees in Gethsemane silently escape from the hands of his murderers? Could not he who spoke the words of command to the winds and waves, so that they slumbered at his feet,—could not he have quelled the tumult of all these people? Nay, did he not claim power from the Father to bring more than twelve legions of angels to his aid? And was not even this traitorous band driven back, falling to the ground, before they put the hand of arrest upon him? But when all failed, and he was borne away by the ruthless murderers, and the other disciples, stricken with fear, had fled in all directions, you can possibly enter into the tumult and confusion of Peter's soul when, with lingering affection, he still follows his Master, even into the hall of the High Priest. You can imagine how utterly unprepared he was, in his bewilderment, to answer to the challenge coming to him from an unsuspected quarter; and having once denied his Lord, that he should follow it up with denial after denial. Certainly, this is to be discriminated from the guilt of Judas, who broods over his crime day after day and month after month. Why, it is not difcult in imagination to see Ju las in his first recoil from the bold, bad thought of betrayal as it bursts upon him ; and then as he invites it back, and looks at it, until it loses its hideousness. It is easy to conceive how gradually the dreadful thought matures into a fixed purpose ; and then how day after day, he revolves his guilty plans, knowing his Master's personal habits and places of retirement, until Christ delivers to him at the supper the sop. Then it is that Satan enters fully into him, and the fatal excision takes place which cuts him off from the communion of the church ; and he goes out to gather around him his allies, pursuing his Master through the garden of Gethsemane to betray him with a kiss. The suddenness of Peter's fall, under the pressure of an urgent temptation, may surely be discriminated from the guilt of him who through

long months had fully matured his crime and his mode of accomplishing it.

2. *Then, too, the motives by which the two were prompted—Peter by a natural fear and the instinctive love of life : Judas by the most sordid of all the passions that move the human heart, the base love of gold !* There in the presence of the Council before whom his master undergoes the mockery of a trial, in the sight of the scourging and the scorn, how natural it was that Peter should apprehend the same for himself ! That for the moment he should be cowed by the mockings and the sneers that were ringing in his ears from the rude mob around him in the vestibule, and should recoil from his Master's side and deny that he so much as knew him ! How different is this from the greedy covetousness, which could take the very body and blood and the cruel anguish and suffering of a bosom friend, and sell them for silver ! Oh ! the detestable baseness of a nature that could entertain the thought of selling a friend for money ! and for thirty pieces of silver, which he could in a moment count in the palm of his hand ! How different, then, the crimes in the different motives by which the two men were actuated.

3. *In Peter's case, there was no heart denial of his Lord : it was only of the lips.* Did he not love his Master ? He seems to have had at least more physical nerve than any of the others. We are told that, at the instant of Christ's apprehension by the traitors, they all forsook him and fled : and only Peter, generous and impetuous in his nature, follows Jesus with a deep, earnest, though smothered affection, in his soul. There could be no deliberate denial of the heart in such a case. But in Judas there was a total estrangement of all the affections, and a shameful betrayal of Christ's person to his foes. My hearers, may I, in a solitary sentence, not having liberty to expand it, touch upon that strange and frightful feature of human nature—the deep unconquerable hatred that always gathers into the heart of the wrong-doer ? Men talk of the resentments of those who are wronged ; of the deep and bitter animosities which lie in the hearts of those who are oppressed : but if human history reveals a solitary truth, it is that the hatred of all hatreds, the most indomitable and the most cruel, broods in the heart of him who inflicts the wrong. And if you want to become transformed, in your inmost soul, into an absolute devil, I merely tell you, wrong your neighbor ; cheat him, defraud him, oppress him, use your influence and power to inflict upon him injury, day after day, and year after year ; and by the fixed laws which God has given to the human soul, you pass from a man into a devil at the last. It is bound to be so. And hence there

sprung up in the heart of this traitor a desperate enmity against his Lord, from the moment in which the thought of his betrayal was conceived.

4. *In Peter there was only the suppression of his discipleship.* He was not responsible for his Master's blood. Others had bound Him, and given Him over into the power of his enemies. All that he was responsible for, was the withholding of his sympathy and the expression of his love. It was the hour of the Savior's dismal need; if ever he wanted a friend, it was then; and all that was manly or Christian in Peter's soul should have responded to his Lord's necessities, even though it had cost him his life to sustain that Lord in his woe. It was not to be. Ah! it had long ago been written of this sufferer, that he must tread the wine press of his Father's wrath alone, and that, of all the people, there should be none with him. And, therefore, though Peter is the spectator of his sufferings, yet, in fulfilment of that ancient prophecy, he must withdraw from his Lord and surrender Him to his foes, and even give the last sting by his base denial. But that was all—the withholding of personal sympathy: weakness, but not treachery; desertion, but not betrayal.

III.—LET US CONSIDER THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO MEN, AFTER THEY ARE BROUGHT TO A RECOGNITION OF THEIR GUILT.

1. *Judas is judicially abandoned; Peter, only temporarily deserted.* From Judas every restraint is withheld, no gracious influence is imparted, he is given over to work out his crime. Satan enters into him, by whom he is driven forward to his doom. Oh! sinner, who so often exclaims against the importunity of Christian friends "let me alone—let me alone"— secretly, in the petulance of your spirit, saying the same thing to the Holy Ghost, knowest thou what the words import? If God should respond to it, and there be a suspension of all gracious influences and a withdrawal of His blessed Spirit, you read your guilt and your doom in the fate of Judas. But Peter was deserted only temporarily, in the way of correction and discipline; for in the very prophecy of his fall there was given an assurance of his recovery. "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Brethren, let us, who are afraid of the devil, take comfort from the thought that before the devil has leave to bring one solitary temptation and lay it down in our path, the interceding prayer has already gone up from the Savior's heart, by which we shall either be saved from the fall, or else be recovered from it The

word is for us too, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

2. *In the case of Judas there was only remorse; in Peter, sincere repentance.* And here I recur for an instant to that thought of the philosopher about the caricature. Why, my hearers, there is not a grace wrought by the Holy Spirit in the Christian's heart which the devil does not caricature. Here is the Christian's meekness, and over against it the world's cowardice; and because the world only knows its cowardice, it calls our meekness by that name—it is the travesty of grace. There is the Christian's deep and honest humility, when he bows in the dust and exclaims before God, "I am less than the least of all thy mercies;" and over against it stands the world's meanness and humiliation of spirit, by which it is capable of doing anything that is unutterably scornful and base. And so, over against the honest, spontaneous repentance of Peter, in full contrast is presented the remorse of Judas. It is sorrow for sin looking the two ways—upward towards the heaven of which repentance is born, and downward to hell, out of which remorse springs. They radically differ in the nature of the exercises themselves: remorse arising only from considering the consequences of sin (you remember it is recorded of Judas that "when he saw Jesus was condemned he repented"); repentance springing from a spiritual insight into the nature and heinousness of the sin itself, and mourning for it before God. They differ also in the agents by whom they are produced: repentance being wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit coming down from the Father to produce it as a spiritual grace; while remorse is wrought in the heart by Satan, who leads us off farther and farther from God. Here is the honest repentance of Peter, springing out of the Master's look; that look which was a look of *reminder;* that look which was a look of *rebuke;* that look which was a look of *personal grief;* that look which was a look of *pity;* that look which was a look of *forgiveness*, anticipating the very prayer that should fall from his lips on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" that look which was a look of *counsel*, telling Peter to go out into the dark and away from the scoffers who would betray him into sin.

3. *In Judas there was a total and final rejection of Christ; in Peter, a loving return to him.* In the presence of the sacrifice "offered up once for all in the end of the world to take away sin," Judas stood; looked upon it, rejected it, spurned it. Peter goes into the darkness of the night and weeps bitterly over his sin; and, as the story soon tells you, returns to his Lord. There is a peculiar silence in the narrative

about Peter through all the remaining passion of Christ. He does not appear in the story when the Savior was crucified, nor when he was laid in Joseph's tomb; and nothing is said of him during the three days of great suspense endured by all the believers at Jerusalem: But he comes to light again on the morning of the third day, side by side with his twin-brother in his Saviour's love, the dear John; and the two together are the first to look in the sepulchre, and Peter is the first to enter it. Again we see Peter at the sea of Tiberias, casting, at the Master's command, the net over the right side of the ship, and taking an innumerable draught of fishes. Oh! see how character is drawn upon the canvas of inspiration! It is the holy seer of Patmos, the mystic among the apostles, the disciple whom Jesus loved and who lay upon his bosom at the supper—it is John, who, with the intuition of a loving heart, first recognized the risen Christ, and said to Peter, "It is the Lord." And then it is Peter, his whole character coming out in the act, that girds aronnd him the fisher's coat and leaps into the sea, and goes to the shore, to be the first at his Master's side. And it was Peter who, a little afterwards, when they had dined upon those same fishes, heard the thrice repeated challenge, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" and thrice returned the challenge by an appeal to Christ's omniscience, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Let us be comforted by the thought, that Peter comes right out of his oath against Christ, right out of his absolute denial of the Lord Jesus, and stands in his penitence before the eye of his Master, appealing to his omniscience—"Thou knowest that I love thee." Like the changes of night and day, of darkness and light, such are the alternations found in the experience of God's children; all due to the mighty power of the grace that works repentance and love in our hearts.

4. *Lastly, Judas sealed his guilt by his suicide, and Peter sealed his repentance by a life of consecration to his Master's service.* Judas, in his remorse, anticipated his doom, and hung himself upon the rocks overlooking the valley of Jehoshaphat, cutting off all possible chance of future repentance. Peter lovingly returns to Him he had denied, saying, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee;" and lays upon his heart the blessed command "feed my sheep; feed my lambs." How faithfully he fulfilled his vow of consecration through a long life, we learn from the book of Acts; until, as tradition gives it, when he comes to the hour of His death, which was by crucifixion, he prays that a difference might be made between him and his Lord in being crucified with his head downward.

Such are the differences, not only in the fate, but in the character and conduct of these representative men. I have just three reflections to make, to bring the whole to a practical conclusion; and I must sum them up in a sentence or two. The *first* is that you have the plainest evidence, in all the actions of Judas and of Peter, that they were free and responsible, acting under the power of motives. Judas betrayed his Lord just as freely as you and I, to-day, serve him. Peter denied his Lord just as freely, in the exercise of his own will, as he afterwards served and preached him. And yet both the betrayal by Judas and the denial by Peter were absolutely fixed in the determinate counsel and decree of God, and were the subjects of prophecy hundreds of years before either saw the light. What, then, becomes of the cavil which men are continually pressing, that God Almighty cannot have his plans because the poor human creature is obliged to have his? That we, in order that we may be free agents, must shut up God behind a wall? I do not pretend to reconcile these. I do not know the angle at which these two planes meet; but I do know, from the testimony of Scripture as well as from the testimony of consciousness, that both lie in all history side by side, and are the constituent factors in every event that is produced. You must multiply two by two to make it four; and you must have the agency of man and the providence and sovereignty of God, or you cannot have history. I do not see how you can ever make a web, if the threads run in the loom all one way; but if the threads cross each other at right angles and are driven tight against each other, I can conceive how you may have a web.

Secondly. We see in Peter's fall the wonderful discipline by which he was graciously prepared for his work; revealing to us that paradox of the gospel, how grace, in its power, brings evil out of good, and transmutes the poor, fallen, erring sinner into the accepted messenger of God. The radical defect in Peter's original character was his self-confidence and pride; and God, in this hour of his fall, broke the neck of that pride, and made him ever afterwards the humble, earnest, gentle disciple of his Lord. Brethren, it is just so with you and me. There are Christians, in every age and in all parts of the church, who cannot do as they ought until the Lord God puts them into his mill and absolutely breaks every bone in their body. And he does it. Those whom he designs as chosen vessels to bear His name before the world, he takes and steeps in sorrow, blasts their plans, grinds them in his mill, and reproduces them with a re-cast character, with a sort of resurrection life, springing out of the tribulations which they undergo. Thus, the deny-

ing and the swearing Peters become the bold proclaimers of the gospel in the streets of Jerusalem.

Thirdly. These two, Judas and Peter, are the types, respectively, of the only two classes of sinners. The difference between the sinner and the saint is not that the one sins and the other does not sin; "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" but the difference is found in the behavior of the two in respect to their sins. The one sins, and loves to sin; he rolls it as a sweet morsel under his tongue, and feels no twinge of conscience, except as the consequences of it peep forth like ghosts out of the gloom of eternity upon him. The other sins, but "turns from it with grief and hatred—with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience." There may be a fearful outward resemblance between the two, as there was between Judas and Peter; but they are clearly distinguished in the end: the one persisting in sin till it is finished and reaps its wages—death; the other weeping bitterly over sin, and able still to say, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." These are before us, the types between which to choose. I press the contrast upon your attention: and may the God of all grace enable you to choose wisely! The choice is for eternity.

IV.

GRIEVING THE SPIRIT.

Preached in the Academy of Music on the Evening of Sabbath, August 22, 1875.

EPHESIANS IV, 30:—"*And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.*"

The essence of Christianity is found in the fact that it is the religion of a sinner. Incidentally, indeed, it inculcates a morality which is as much above that of the Academy and the Porch as the heavens are above the earth. But this is purely by the way. Its main design is to teach the sinner how to escape the curse of the broken law, and to recover the favor of God. Its fundamental teachings, therefore, cover two points: PARDON and the NEW BIRTH. Around the first of these gather all those doctrines that touch the person and work of Jesus Christ: such as His incarnation in the form of a servant, His voluntary substitution in the place of His people, His expiatory sufferings and death, his priestly intercession before the throne of His Father in Heaven, and His mediatorial rule at the Father's right hand in glory. Around the second of these centres are clustered all the doctrines which touch the person and office of the Holy Ghost: as He enlightens the sinner's mind, rouses the sinner's conscience, renews the sinner's heart, and, as he comforts, seals, sanctifies and finally glorifies the believer.

The text, you perceive, falls into the latter of these divisions—"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." It is a little remarkable that nearly all the warnings in Scripture, in reference to the Holy Ghost, are primarily addressed to those who profess to be the people of God. With the exception of the memorable declaration (which, however, is of somewhat doubtful interpretation) in Genesis vi, 3, "My spirit shall not always strive with man;" and with the exception again of the fearful caution in Matthew xii, 31:32, as to "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," all the exhortations, in reference to this Person of the Godhead, presuppose the parties addressed to be in visible covenant with Jehovah. This will appear from looking through the chapter in which the text is

found; where Paul distinguishes those to whom he writes from the Gentile world, as having "learned Christ," as "having put off the old man," and as "being renewed in the spirit of their mind." The work of "sealing," too, referred to in the text, assumes those here addressed to be professedly at least the subjects of divine grace. I do not know that I can adequately explain this singular fact, unless you will accept, as sufficient, the principle that the greater includes the less. Certainly, none can enjoy the influences of the Spirit in sanctification who have not experienced his power in conversion and the new birth. His later operations in carrying on "the work of faith with power" in the human soul, presuppose His earlier operations in conviction for sin and repentance unto life. The exhortation to Christians, not to grieve the Holy Ghost, will apply to sinners by a necessary implication. The one is potentially included in the other.

I shall therefore take the words of the text in their widest application to all before me, who, in any stage of experience, feel upon their hearts the movements of this blessed agent. I will not stop to ask whether you are a Christian or a sinner. If so be, He is striving with any one of you this night, I will press the warning, "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."

1. *First of all, because of the solemnity of so personal and recognized a contact with God.* We are always in contact with God, for He is everywhere. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." [Psalm cxxxix, 7-12.] But God's presence is not always so discovered to us, as to enlist the devotional sentiment. Yet there are seasons, in His adorable providence, when he comes so nigh to us, and with so distinct a pressure, that, if conscience be not utterly seared, we must tremble with awe before Him. In times of sickness, when we are brought into the dust of death; in seasons of bereavement, when the curtain is drawn over the darkened window, and we are shut up to communion with our own sad and bitter memories; in the days when famine stalks through the land, and snatches the black crust from the lips of the starving; when war tramples beneath its iron hoof the bleeding and the slain, and

the cries of the widow and the orphan go up to Heaven in symphony of woe; in the pestilence, when the angel of death flaps his black wing over the city, and the mourners go about the streets, and thousands are borne to their long home; in the storm and tempest, when hoarse thunders roll down the pavement of the sky, or break over us in startling peals, as though the whole artillery of Heaven were discharged in a single volley, and sharp lightnings cleave the clouds like the flashing swords of angry cherubim: surely, in these appearances of God, we must draw the mantle over our heads and bow broken in spirit at His feet. Yet, in all these cases supposed, He makes no such near approach to us: as when His blessed Spirit slides into the very sanctuary of the human soul, and lays His awful hand upon every thought and feeling, and causes these to flow in new channels and to beat with a new pulsation. You may then endorse this, the argument of *reverence;* and lay it up in the heart, as a reason for not grieving the Holy Spirit of God.

2. *Because he comes to us only as the exponent of God's infinite love.* Has it ever occurred to you that the Holy Spirit is the only Person of the Godhead who is never associated, in the Scriptures, with any office of terror or of wrath? I am sure it will strike you as very impressive, as soon as it is mentioned: and not less so, that His peculiar designation in the New Testament should be that of "COMFORTER." God, in the person of the Father, holds in his hands the reins of universal empire, and is the official administrator of law. "The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with majesty;" "He sitteth between the cherubim." It is He who giveth the commission to His Son to execute the office of a Redeemer; it is by Him that work is accepted when it is finished; and it is He who passes the justifying decree upon the believer who, through this imputed righteousness, is accepted before him. He is Supreme Lord and Ruler over all, "doing according to His will among the armies of Heaven and the inhabitants of earth;" and the sceptre of his kingdom is a righteous sceptre. So, too, with the Son. Though sweetly presented, in His human form, as the lamb slain from the foundation of the world—the one sacrifice offered up once for all to take away sin—yet is He also discovered as the Lion of the tribe of Judah who shall rend the wicked in his fury, in that day when He shall place His throne upon the clouds and open the books out of which the nations shall be judged. Against the cross of his shame stands the throne of his glory: and the voice of mercy from the one rolls over to the other in the tremendous accusation, "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught

all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." [Proverbs i, 24:26.]

But the Holy Ghost is presented in the Scriptures with no symbols of majesty to overawe. He sits upon no particular throne to throw upon us the shadow of fear. He has no office but that of love. He comes from the Father and the Son, with a commission sealed by both, to whisper in our ears the message of gracious reconciliation. He goes down into the conscience, and warns that of guilt and sin. He touches the affections of the heart, and woos them by the overtures of forgiving love. He repeats the promises and calls of the Gospel, and breaks up the despair which would bind us in the fetters of fear. He breathes into us the breath of spiritual life, and we are quickened from our death in sin. He reveals to us a personal Savior, and implants the faith by which He is received as our own. All his functions are those of tenderness and grace; for even in his most solemn warnings there is this constant undertone of saving love. You may therefore endorse this, the argument of *gratitude;* and store it in the memory as a reason for not grieving the Holy Spirit.

God forbid that I should disparage the love of the Father or of the Son. It is written of the first, that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." [John iii, 16.] And we can only measure the love of the second by the sweep of that condescension which brought him from the Father's bosom to "take upon Him the form of a servant," and by the depth of that anguish which he endured when the sword of infinite justice pierced him for sins that were not his own. Nay, rather let us exclaim:

> "Oh, for this love let rocks and hills
> Their lasting silence break;
> And, all harmonious, human tongues
> The Savior's praises speak."

But then let us put upon equality with this the love of that Divine Spirit who comes down into a heart which is as "a cage of unclean birds," in contact with all the defilement he finds there; and who submits to all the contumely and scorn with which He is buffeted, or, to what is just as offensive, to the frozen indifference with which his offers of salvation are passed by. We can make no comparison between the grace and compassion of the Three, for they are one in these counsels of mercy, and the love of each is equal to the measure of either of the rest. The affections of men yield to the voice of human kindness, just

as the strings of the Æolian harp yield responsive music to the soft breath of summer. How strange, that they are not moved by the love of God, when this blessed Spirit brings it down from Heaven and interprets it to the soul! Can there be a stronger proof of man's estrangement from God, or of the desperate hardness of his heart, than this utter insensibility to the constant wooings of infinite and divine love?

3. We may not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, *since we can be saved only through His mighty power*. It is common to hear men say, "I do not know whether it is God's purpose to save me." Do they know any better that it is his purpose *not* to save them? Pardon me, if I should seem to use language a little severe; I trust it is only the faithful severity of one who would uncover a fatal imposture: all this kind of talk about the secret purposes of the Most High is simply and unutterably absurd. From the nature of the case, we cannot shape our course by these secret intentions of Jehovah, simply because they are *secret*. Understand me fully, just here. I do not say that men *ought not* to base their determinations upon the unrevealed purposes of the Almighty. But I go immeasurably beyond this and say that, from the very laws of our nature, it is simply impossible that they shall do it. By the fixed constitution of the human soul, that cannot prove an operative motive, or a basis of action, which is absolutely unknown. It cannot come within the sphere of our thought so long as it is hidden; and therefore can exert no influence upon the decision of our will. It is in accordance with the soundest philosophy, when the Scriptures declare, "secret things belong unto God, but the things which are revealed belong to us and to our children." The man passes upon himself the simplest of all delusions, who supposes that he is embarrassed, in the slightest degree, by his ignorance of thoughts which God reserves in the silence of his own mind. It will be well for him if he shall discover in time that the plea thus set up is either a blind of Satan, or perhaps a half-conscious evasion of duty on his own part.

I submit, that the awakened sinner should reason to the precise reverse of this. Let him take the testimony of all the redeemed upon the earth, as to the process of their translation from darkness to light. Amidst all the varieties of that experience he finds this uniform trait: that, by some mysterious power, their spiritual apathy was broken, and they were brought to feel the guilt and ruin in which they were plunged; and that when they were crying out in their despair, Christ appeared to them in His beauty, and they could not but embrace Him as "all their salvation and all their desire;" and with this came "the peace that passeth

understanding." Let him then ascend to the world above, and question the multitude, which no man hath numbered, of those who swell the anthem, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for He hath redeemed us with His own blood:" and the same testimony is repeated of the "conviction of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Of all the saved, in Heaven and upon earth, there is not one whose experience in this differs from the rest. What then ought to be the line of thought with this enquirer? So far as his own feelings have been developed, the parallel is perfect between his case and theirs. So far as he has gone, it is upon the same path which those in glory once travelled. Let him then dismiss his cavils about God's unrevealed will; let him accept with grateful joy the tokens of the Spirit's presence, and yield to His sacred influence, until he too shall be drawn in faith and love to the Savior's feet. You may then endorse this, the argument of *interest*, which shall persuade you not to grieve the Holy Ghost. For if we are saved only through His power, what is resistance of Him, in any form, but to put in peril that salvation which, once forfeited, can never be recovered?

5. A fourth reason for the exhortation is that *the Person and Office of the Holy Ghost are guarded with solemn and peculiar sanctions.* I said, a few moments since, that He sustained no office of terror or of wrath. And I said what is true: but it is one of those half truths which might mislead, unless qualified by what I am about to add. It is also true that no one of the Persons of the Godhead is protected, in the Scriptures, by cautions that are so fearful. Hear the language: "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto man: and whosoever speaketh a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world neither in the world to come." [Matthew xii, 31:32.] The words are frightfully solemn, like a voice immediately from the judgment throne.

I do not know that we are able to assign the reasons for this discrimination, since the Three are equal in authority and power, and are equally employed upon the scheme of grace. Perhaps it is because the Spirit is the last of the Three; so that he who sins past the Holy Ghost, has sinned past the Godhead. If we sin against the Father, we may be caught in the arms of the Son. If we sin still against the Son, the Spirit may possibly interpose for our rescue. But if we sin against this last, there remains behind no other upon whose mercy and power we

may fall back. This may be the reason. Or, it may be because the scheme of grace is assigned to the Spirit in its final stage, when it comes to be applied. He that sins against the Father, sins against this grace in its inception; he that sins against the Son, sins against this grace in its execution: but he that sins against the Holy Ghost, sins against grace in its application. He has put away the great salvation at the very point where it touches him. He has exhausted all the provisions of mercy, and has shot clean past the only grace through which he can be saved. This, then, may be the reason. Or, it may be the necessary protection around the person of the Spirit; because He has laid aside all the symbols of majesty, and blends His agency with the free operations of the creature's will. It seems fit that when He receives the joint commission of the Father and the Son, it should be sealed with all the sanctions of their authority. In the lowliness of his condescension in dealing with man's actual sin and corruption of nature, He should not be left defenceless in His work: and therefore he is covered by the other two with all the majesty of their protection, of which this warning is the proof.

But whatever the explanation—whether this, or that, or the other—there is this appalling fact: that the only sin which is declared to be irremissible is a sin against the third Person of the Trinity. I will not undertake, in this connection, to discuss the peculiar form in which this sin is committed. It seems pretty clear that it cannot be the ordinary resistance of the Holy Ghost; for who is there of us who has not been guilty of this? Such an interpretation, so far from mitigating the terror of the caution, closes the door of hope even upon those who, this day, are rejoicing in the divine mercy. From the entire context in Matthew it would appear to be a malicious ascription of the Spirit's agency to that of the devil—when a man resists the truth, knowing it to be truth, with malignant hatred, and in the conspicuous expression of this hatred, renders a formal homage to the Prince of Darkness. But the caution is none the less significant under this interpretation of it. For, my hearers, the most startling retribution for sin, in this life, is the being judicially abandoned to pass from slighter transgressions to those which are greater. He who grieves the Holy Ghost in the usual operations of His power, has no guarantee that he will not be left to commit that sin which has no forgiveness, "neither in this world, neither in the world to come." You may therefore endorse this, the argument of *warning*, that you may not "grieve the Holy Spirit of God." And let no sinner say, in the arrogance of his pride, that he is not afraid of "the terrors

of the Lord," and that he will not be cowed into submission before them. Such would be the language of mere bravado: and need I tell you that bravado is the thinnest of all disguises beneath which you but half conceal your fear? It is right that you should be afraid of God, if still unreconciled to Him: for "can you thunder with a voice like His," that you should "set the briers and thorns against him in battle?" Alas! He "will go through them and burn them together!"

But some one will rise in this assembly and say, "Of all this I am deeply persuaded: no doom appears to me so dreadful as to be finally deserted by the Spirit of God; and if I know my own heart, there is nothing that I would more anxiously avoid—but tell me how I may escape that dismal fate." The challenge, my friend, is a most proper one. For sure I am, there are many who would not of set purpose drive from them the Holy Ghost, who do persist in a course which results in his departure. Let me then explain how, in two or three ways, the sinner may unwittingly grieve Him away.

1. *By an unwillingness to recognize His presence, or to acknowledge himself the subject of His gracious influence.* All who have to deal with awakened sinners know how hard it is to bring them to the acknowledgement of their secret concern. They parry every question with an adroitness that is conspicuous—sometimes, with a flippancy that is mournful: and it is not until the distress overmasters them, that they are brought to a confession which they construe into a sign of weakness Now, understand me on this point: I do not complain that a man is slow to confide to *me* the secret convictions of his own heart—though I might hope to throw the light of my experience upon his which is darker, and thus to help him over a road which I have travelled myself. On the contrary, I respect a reserve which I believe to be natural to us, and which cannot be rudely rent without pain and damage to the sensibilities. God has thrown a veil over feelings that are sacred, that they may be protected from the rude gaze of those whom they do not concern. It is not easy for the wife to speak to any of that deep affection which she feels for the companion of her youth; nor can the parent babble in the market-place that love which he feels for his offspring. These emotions are too sacred to be profaned by exposure to the multitude, and they are hid in the deepest recesses of the soul. Are the feelings less sacred which the Spirit works in us towards God? and can they be breathed except by whispers into the ear of the most confiding friendship? No, it is the experience which is the most shallow that is

made the subject of gossip, and is easily uncovered to the scrutiny of every passer by upon the streets. It is not this constitutional reserve which hides from me the secret of his heart, of which I here complain. It is that the sinner will not acknowledge it even to himself: that he will not pause in the hurry of life to ascertain the source of his own unrest, and fails to recognize the divine voice which is challenging his ear. How often is a man unhappy, and he cannot tell why? Prosperous in business, surrounded by admiring friends, lying down amidst the endearments of his home, he ought to be happy—but he is not. God has hedged him round with plenty, his corn and his wine are increased, his barns are bursting in their fullness: why does he not eat and drink and rise up and play, as aforetime? Ah! he knows not that a mysterious hand is "stirring up his nest," and throwing him out upon the wing, that he may soar to brighter and purer joys than those which satisfy him not. But he heeds it not. He will not pause long enough to ask what it is that troubles him. Is it strange that the Holy Spirit, who has thus been knocking at the door of his heart, should go away grieved? Suppose that, to-morrow, you should go to the house of a neighbor, and knock for admission. You hear the sound of voices within, and know the inmates to be within the reach of your call. Yet, you knock and knock, with somewhat that is impatient and imperative in the challenge. But the dull ears within respond not to the call. Would you not go from that dwelling with a grieved heart, and require some explanation of this caprice before you should be pacified? Thus, sinner, does the Spirit wait at your door. If you will not take the trouble to open it, and see who it is that knocks, will He not turn His feet away in disappointment and anger? For is He not a person, with personal sensibilities to be wounded by the indignity of your indifference, whether it be real or assumed?

2. *Men grieve the Spirit by laboring to extinguish these convictions, and to escape from present distress.* The pangs of the second birth, like the pangs of the first, must be felt by all. It is not possible to have the mask of self-complacency torn suddenly away, and discover all the vileness of our sin before God, without experiencing the liveliest shame in the contrast. It is not possible to awake suddenly from the sense of security to the contemplation of our amazing peril under the curse of the law, without feeling all the alarm and terror which the anticipation of coming wrath can arouse. Unhappily, the first effort is to choke off convictions which are so distressing, and to recover the peace which has fled from us. Every expedient is tried in order to extinguish

thought. Men addict themselves more than ever to business, and become steeped to the lips in care, to escape the pursuit of conscience. They mingle in society, and whirl in the circles of pleasure, that they may banish these gloomy reflections. They shut themselves up in a stony stoicism, and seek as if by solid rock to wall out these persecuting fancies. Everything is tried but the one thing that would take the sting away—"faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and repentance towards God." Is it wonderful that our obstinate folly should drive away the Holy Spirit, who by these necessary pains is shutting us up to the only physician that can cure? How much better to endure the temporary pain of salutary conviction, through which we pass into the joy of the second birth, and call God our Father in the truest sense!

3. *We grieve the Spirit often by a too sedulous cultivation of our our mere emotions.* This is the opposite fault, and is a most subtle temptation. I shall have to crave your special attention to it. The cry bursts ever from the lips of men, "I do not feel enough"—and that often when the trembling lip and quivering frame betray the convulsion within them. It is the touch of the Spirit's hand; and as the tide of a new life is pouring in upon them, they only recognize the deadness and the hardness from which they are being delivered. And so, in their mistake, they try to make themselves feel more. They turn the law in upon the conscience, that they may be torn with its sharp points and bleed at every pore. How little do they know that they have fallen upon the surest method to kill all the feeling which they have. It requires little knowledge of the laws of our spiritual economy to tell them that our emotions are involuntary, and cannot be produced by direct efforts expended upon them. If one desires to experience the emotion of the beautiful, shall he sit down upon his chair of logic and prove that he ought to have it? The argument shall be invincible, but still the feeling does not come. What then? Why let him stand before an exquisite painting, and trace each separate feature, and then group them together in the unity of the artiste's original conception, and the sense of beauty will steal over his spirit with the witchery of its spell. Or let him, from some mountain peak, look down upon a varied landscape. Let his eye fall on this meadow, with its carpeting of grassy verdure; upon that field of ripening grain, hanging down its golden locks as if sighing for the reaper's scythe; upon the graceful rivulet, flowing with gentle curves, and murmuring its soft song in its pebbly bed; upon the half-hidden cottage enclosed with vines, above which the thin smoke wreathes itself in its ascent to the clouds; upon the delicate

shadows which these white clouds themselves throw down upon the plain below, mellowing the brightness with which it is dripping; and upon the fringe of forest which girdles it all round, like the frame of a picture hanging upon your wall: and then, unless he have "the dull, leaden eye of an ox," he will be seized with that strange trembling which comes upon us when the soul is steeped in some holy sentiment and is dissolving in its bliss.

Or, do you wish to feel the sublime? Go and throw yourselves at the foot of Niagara; see the waters in their mad leap over the bold precipice into the boiling abyss beneath, and the sun painting the delicate rainbow upon the spray, while the majestic voice of the waters, in the roar of the fall, chants the song which nature in her majesty pours into the ear of God: and if you do not bow down under the weight of a supreme awe, it is because you are less than a man—incapable of the worship which even earth itself offers to its Creator.

Just so in the religious sphere. The emotions we desire to awaken come at no open call; we must touch the fountains out of which they flow We must stand in the presence of the objects which entice them forth. It seems to me, my hearers, there is the profoundest philosophy in that great and single command of the Gospel—"believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Why, look at it. There is a trinity of powers in man, and they are bound together in solid unity. We have mind, that we may think and reason and know; we have heart, with its web of affections, that we may feel and love and hate; we have will, with its mighty executive force, that we may choose and resolve and do. And these are held together in a relation which is indissoluble. Man thinks, and by the friction of thought kindles the fire of feeling: and when his whole spirit is fused in the intensity of this glow, feeling crystallizes into fixed forms by the determinations of the will. Grace recognizes this principle of our nature, and issues its command at once to receive Christ by the act of faith. It never tells us to stop and feel more, but at once to express the feeling—be it much or be it little—in the act of trust. By the very connection of these three, the act reflects upon the feeling and deepens it. The way to increase feeling is to pour it out upon its appropriate object, which can alone excite it and draw it forth. If we seek to deepen these affections by a direct attention, they evaporate in the very handling of them. They are like those volatile essences which we must cork up tightly in a vial; as soon as they are exposed, they are dissipated in the air. This is the mistake to which I refer—the contradiction of that fixed law upon which the existence of our

emotions depends. A man may attempt to draw a charmed circle around them, and pile the fuel by which they may be made to glow: but it will be only to fall back, a charred and blackened ruin, into his own ashes again.

After all, it is but a subtle manifestation of that legal spirit, which seeks to substitute our own frames in the place of Christ as a Savior—to qualify ourselves for the divine favor by a course of self-inflicted torture; just as the Indian fakir throws himself upon a bed of spikes. What is this but to repel that blessed Comforter, whose sole office is to "take the things of Christ and show them unto us?" In rejecting that Savior whom it is His mission to glorify, we grieve that Spirit from our hearts.

4. *We grieve Him by postponement and delay.* The history of many a lost soul is contained in one sad sentence—after a few fitful endeavors to secure peace with God, the whole collapsed in the fatal decision to postpone until to-morrow. How can we more offend than by trenching thus upon the divine prerogative, as though we had a perpetual lease of life?

> "In human hearts what bolder thought can rise,
> Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn?
> Where is to-morrow? in another world!
> And yet on this Perhaps, this Peradventure,
> Infamous for lies, we build as on a rock
> Of adamant our mountain hopes, and spin
> Eternal schemes, as we the fatal sisters would outspin;
> And big with life's futurities, expire."

To-day is ours; to-morrow is with God, to give or to withhold. As Tupper sings:

> "A man's life is a tower, with a staircase of many steps,
> That, as he toileth upward, crumble successively behind him:
> No going back, the past is an abyss; no stopping, for the present perisheth;
> But ever hasting on, precarious on the foothold of to-day.
> Our cares are all to-day, our joys are all to-day;
> And in one little word, our life, what is it but to-day?"

There is no excuse for our folly in this thing: for hath not God put a clock in our very frame to tick the moments as they fly? Place your finger upon your wrist: every beat of that pulse is "the constant syllable ticking from the clock of time." Place your hand over your heart: each throb, as it beats against your palm, is a separate life; for only as it throbs you live. God warns you of your creatureship, as He measures out your life by the inch. And each of those separate lives is charged with its own responsibilities. We can delay repentance and faith, not even till the ticking of the clock assures us of the moment

that succeeds. Each beat of the pulse, every throb of the heart, goes up to the judgment with its separate accusation of guilt. Oh, that you would take the counsel which God has lodged in the very structure of your body! Before you can have time to go through the doors of this building—nay, my hearers, before you have time to rise from these seats—repent and be saved! Now, as the call sounds in your ear, and before its echo is swallowed up in the word that comes after, cast your soul upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Every promise is made to the present: "behold, *now*, NOW, is the accepted time; behold, *now*, NOW, is the day of salvation." Insult not the Holy Ghost by asking Him, even for one instant, to bend His sovereignty to your indolence or caprice, lest He leave you in His grief.

"God's Spirit will not always strive
With hardened, self-destroying man;
Ye who persist His love to grieve,
May never hear his voice again.
Sinner, perhaps this very day
Thy last accepted time may be;
Oh, shouldst thou grieve Him now away,
Then hope may never beam on thee."

V.

LOVE TO AN UNSEEN CHRIST.

St. John xxi, 17:—"*And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.*"

There were occasions in the earthly history of Christ when He exhibited all the sympathies and affections of the human heart, both of joy and of sorrow; for example, at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, and at the tomb of Lazarus. But, so far as I can remember, this is the only instance in which He ever betrayed anything approaching to what we ordinarily call sentiment. In the severity of His holiness as man, and in the sublime consciousness of His trust as the mediator, we are accustomed to think of Him as lifted above the necessity, if not above the reach, of human sympathy. The reader, therefore, pauses upon this peculiar passage, feeling that there must be in it something more than sentiment, and seeks for a deeper significance lying concealed. That Christ should thrice challenge Simon's love, and should thrice impose upon him a corresponding injunction, is suggestive of some moral purpose, which we naturally desire to explore. When it is remembered that Peter, but a little before, had thrice denied his Lord, we find in this a clue to the whole dialogue. It was throughout a proceeding of compassionate love, offering His now penitent disciple an opportunity of retracting his profane denial; and the three-fold injunction, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep," was the restitution of his honor and office, which Peter might well suppose forfeited by his fall.

But see the severity of Christ in the very dealing of His love. It is intimated in the style of the address: "Simon, son of Jonas"—not Peter, the baptismal name of discipleship. Does it not seem to imply that the new relation of grace was forever cancelled? that Peter is now to be thrown out of the school of his Lord, and to be nothing more than what he was before his call to the apostleship, "Simon, son of Jonas?" It is intimated again in the question, "Lovest thou me more than these?" which refers not, as many superficially interpret, to the fishes

and the nets; as though Christ meant to say, "Dost thou love me more than these earthly possessions, and art thou now willing to forsake all and follow me?" The language refers, without doubt, to those other disciples: "Lovest thou me more than they?" You remember that Peter once affirmed the pre-eminence of his loyalty and love: "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." He could not know, by consciousness, the depth of attachment which they felt to Christ; but he could, by consciousness, know his own: and, therefore, it seemed to him possible that they might be betrayed into that grievous fault, but not himself. Yet, more basely than all the rest, did Peter deny his Master. And now the Lord brings it up before his mind in the question which He addresses to him, in order that he may purge himself of the offence which had been committed against his brethren. Peter, in his modesty and in his humility, is content with simply affirming his own affection, but without any ungracious comparison. This union of faithful severity with forgiving tenderness marks, my brethren, all the divine dealings with penitent souls. How severe is the admonition, before the consolations of grace are administered to us! Just as, with a kind severity, the knife of the surgeon cuts around and drives the probe down to the bottom of the ulcer, in order that the relief and the cure may the more quickly come. In the language of Solomon, "The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil;" "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." And therefore it is that these stripes, in the language of the same Solomon, go down into the "chambers of the body."*

Before I pass from this verbal exposition of the text, I must remark upon the distinction between the two words employed by Christ and Peter in this singular colloquy: a distinction which is so persistently employed by the two, as to show that it was not without design. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me *(agapas me)*?" "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee *(philo se)*." It is not until the third challenge that Christ condescends to Peter's word, and the controversy between them is healed by His adoption of it: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me *(phileis me)*?" And then it is, when Christ has come down to the plane of Peter's own consciousness and testimony, that with renewed emphasis he asseverates his love: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." It would not be profitable to engage here in a philological disquisition. It will suffice to say that the word chosen

*As some translate the clause in our version, "the inward parts of the belly."

by Christ, and held to with such persistency, implies a moral appreciation of him, and a consequent restful satisfaction in him; whilst the word of Peter implies simply an inward, personal affection. The two are not necessarily exclusive of each other; nay, they are rather united in every true Christian experience. But the word of Christ is the higher word of the two; while the word of Peter simply gives the testimony of his own heart as to the reality of his personal love. There is a clue to this lying just below the surface of the word, which it is worth our while to put the finger upon. There was a bright hour in Peter's experience, when he replied to the Master's question, "Whom say ye that I am?" by answering, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus accepts the noble confession, declares that it is the rock upon which He will build His church here upon the earth; and gives to him who made the confession, in the name of all the apostles, the keys of the kingdom, with the assurance that "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Then there was a dark hour in Peter's history, when, trembling under the accusation of a maid-servant, he exclaimed, "I know not the man." In the subtle employment of a single word, Christ brings the two declarations, side by side in sharp contrast, before his erring disciple: and, in substance, says to him: "Peter, by which of these two declarations do you now stand? Are you prepared to say that I am 'the Christ, the son of the living God;' or do you dismiss me from your thought with something of contempt and scorn, as only the man whom you do not know?" And Peter, in his humility, replies, in substance, by the word which he employs: "Lord, I dare not affirm that I see all the excellencies that belong to thy nature, or that I render to thee the homage of all that love which is thy due; but I can say that, in the depths of my soul, I do love thee."

Ah! could Peter say that, immediately after his dismal fall? Is this another exhibition of that self confidence which was so characteristic of the man? Peter is now another sort of Peter from what he was when he denied his Lord in the hall of the High Priest's palace. You see all through this remarkable interview the traces of his humility and of his penitence; and yet, in the fresh remembrance of his shame and dishonor, Peter is able to say, in the face of omniscience itself, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Brethren, we can say the same, blessed be the grace of God by which we are recovered from our falls! And, like Peter, even after the moments of our sin, when the sad memory throws a shadow upon the soul—when in the closet we

lie in the dust, crying out, "God, be merciful to us, sinners"—we are able to lift ourselves up from all that shame, and turning our eyes to the heaven where Jesus is, say to him, with all the confidence of Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that we love thee." Let me, then, attempt this morning to point out the grounds upon which we are able to do this.

I. FAITH PRESENTS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST TO US AS A LIVING PERSON; NOT AS A PERSONAGE OF HISTORY, WHO HAS ENTIRELY PASSED FROM THE STAGE. It appears to me that, after the vivid conception of amiable qualities in those who are dear to us, which is the first condition of human love, the second pre-requisite is that they shall be to us at least *living persons*, and thus brought within the range of our sympathy. This thought can be opened, perhaps, better through illustration than by abstract reasoning. You take up, for example, a well-wrought fiction. As long as the spell of the author's genius is upon you, the characters of the story become to you real persons; and you are transported into the ideal world in which they move, and you mingle with theirs all the currents of your thought and feeling. It is the test of the author's genius when he is able to do just that thing. And hence the shock which we experience when we lay down the book, when the sweet illusions are dispelled, and we turn back to the hard realities of this actual world in which we live. So, too, with the hero of history, who has carved with his sword a mighty empire; or, better still, in the sacrifice of personal ambition, has fostered the best interests of his country, and is written down upon its records as the father of his people. As we praise the admirable deeds wrought by these historic heroes, there may be the most intense admiration; but not that knitting of the heart to them which we denominate love: simply because, as we trace the cold record, we carry along with us a clear knowledge of the fact that they have entirely passed away, where we are utterly unable to touch them with our love. But the best illustration of all is drawn from the remembrance of our own dead. Oh, brethren! the blessedness of that memory by which we are always able to bring them back—transfigured, it may be, clothed with the beautiful light of the glory to which they have gone—yet coming back in the very form in which we knew them upon the earth, which we were accustomed to clasp in our embrace; so that we can see in them the old sparkle of the eye, and hear the familiar and precious tones of the voice! Ah, how they come back with those old remembered forms into the most secret cham-

ber of the soul, and abide there as a living presence! We turn away from the cold, hard world, in which we are obliged to move, and shut ourselves up in that sacred sanctuary, face to face with the living pr es ence, and, by the power of memory and of thought and of affection, hold with it a sweet communion. It is because they are not dead, but to us alive; because, through the power of memory and of imagination combined, they are reproduced before us in the old life, so that they and we move together in the old channels of association, that we are conscious of a deep personal affection to those whom we call our dead. Now, just so, faith presents the Lord Jesus Christ as still living. Though absent in the heavens, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, He lives still, speaks from the excellent glory still: and it is through the apprehension of this living Christ, sustaining living relations to us, that we are conscious of this personal affection which Peter affirms; and can say with him, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that we love thee."

It is this living Christ who gives the freshness and vitality to the Bible, which belongs to no other book. Because He lives in His own essential life, and lives as mediator at the Father's right hand, there is life in all the words and syllables and lines and letters of the sacred book. As you and I walk up and down through its pages, it is as though we were walking arm and arm with our living Lord through the walks of a garden; and as our eyes trace the words, they are not to us the cold impressions of the printing press, but they are the articulate utterances of the living Lord, who speaks through this word, as it is interpreted to us through the Holy Spirit, with His own lips from His throne above. Thus it is that the Bible becomes to us a secondary incarnation of our Lord—the secondary rainbow, the outer halo which we behold around His blessed head. And what is it but this continued life of the Redeemer in the heavens above, which makes Christianity the living and aggressive religion that it is? Even in the feebleness of its infancy, it came forth and impinged upon the huge and hoary idolatries of the world: and, like the little stone cut out of the mountain, it gathers in volume as it rolls, crushing everything beneath its weight. The living Christ, who is its author, communicates His divine life, through His own Spirit, into the hearts and activities of His people; and makes the church a living society, incapable of death—the only society on the face of the whole earth that is absolutely immortal. Because, then, the Lord Jesus is revealed to us by the Spirit as the living Christ, He is brought within the reach of our affections; and our joyful testimony is,

"Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." [1 Peter i, 8]

II. AGAIN, FAITH PRESENTS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST CLOTHED WITH ALL THE SENSIBILITIES AND SYMPATHIES OF A PERFECT MAN. Ah! brethren, we cannot live long without sympathy. It is not the four walls and the narrow space which make the cell of the culprit; but it is the seclusion, in his loneliness and confinement, from all sympathy and communion with his race. I know that in the first access of severe grief the heart instinctively recoils from sympathy. It exclaims, in the language of Job, "Miserable comforters are ye all," when those comforters come with their premature consolations and lay them over upon the wound of the heart. There is a deep philosophy in this. When our loved ones are gone away, away from us, to whom we were accustomed to minister daily, and upon whom we lavished our affections, the heart feels, in the tearing away of these associations, that it has no other form in which to express its love but to feel the pain of the loss. When friends come, with their premature consolations, in the first access of bitter sorrow, and tell us not to weep and not to mourn over our dead, we instinctively feel that they are perpetrating a robbery upon those dead, to whom belong all the affections of the soul: and that, since we can no longer follow them with the ministrations of our love, the least we can do is to go into solitude and feel the pain of the separation. There is a secret luxury in grief; and the greater the pain, the more acute the anguish, the more bitter the tears, the more heart-rending the groans, all the sweeter is the comfort that comes to us in the very indulgence of the woe. Yet, at last, we must come back from our solitude into society; and when time has a little bevelled off the edges of our grief, we exclaim, as did the patriarchal sufferer, "Have pity on me, have pity on me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me." Then, when the heart yearns and looks in every direction for the sympathy which it needs, where shall it be found? There are causes too obvious which prevent others from actually feeling our woe. They may have passed beneath the same sorrows themselves, but were they endowed with the same sensibilities as we? was their suffering as acute? Who can tell? If they had all the sensibility that we have, and we can be persuaded that their suffering was as great as our own, words are no conveyers of grief. You cannot run these tender emotions into the cold iron form of any written word. It is the sigh, the groan,

the sob, the tear, the wrenching of the hands, and the prostration of the body upon the ground! We must fall back upon these mute gestures of the body in order to find the symbols of true grief; for there is no language which can express what is felt in the soul under the bereavements which God inflicts. What we want is a perfect sympathy, and a sympathy which is independent of all cold and external forms of expression—a sympathy which has power to go underneath our sorrow and help us to bear its weight. Where shall we turn in life to find the sympathizing friend who can do this for us, until faith purges the eye and reveals to us "the Lamb standing in the midst of the throne, as it had been slain?" We behold in Him "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," whose "visage was more marred than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." It is He who went down into the depths of human sin, and, therefore, into the depths of human woe; who, in exhausting the cause, has also removed the effects; who not only bore our sins, but carried our sorrows. As there, upon the throne of power, He reveals to us the hands which were pierced and the side which was opened, we can roll ourselves over upon His bosom, with the assurance of a perfect and a tender sympathy. When this "Elder Brother" comes into the sanctuary of our woe, and puts around us the everlasting arms, we feel that we are comforted with the comforts of God, and kissed with the kisses of His mouth. In the experience of His sympathy in the hour of our desolation, we are constrained to say, with tender emotion, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that we love thee."

III. Faith reveals Christ so as to bring us into contact and personal communion with Him. It is not enough simply that Christ and we live, with this stretch of distance between us—he in the one world, we in the other. We must be brought into actual fellowship; and this makes the relation an individual relation between ourselves and our friend. You have read, perhaps, the History of the Reformation by D'Aubigne, of Geneva—a work so powerful in its dramatic character that it brings all the persons of the history right before the mind, and throws you into actual contact with them as living realities; and, as you pore over its pages, your heart goes over the waters to the man who wrote it. But if he had ever sat down and penned you an individual letter, pouring into your ear the experiences of his own soul, you would have felt that this correspondence brought you into a personal relationship, making the attachment infinitely strong. My hearers, this is but

a feeble representation of the correspondence which we are able to maintain with this absent Jesus, now living in the heavens; for when the Holy Ghost interprets to us the word, these promises become the very language of Christ breathing in confidential whispers into our ear the assurance of his grace. It is a peculiarity of faith, in the reading of the Scriptures, that although it may be a word which thousands have read before us, and thousands may read around us, and thousands shall read after us, yet, when the Holy Spirit illuminates our understanding and makes a divine application of it to us, it becomes the personal word of the Savior to ourselves, just as much as though he stooped from the throne of His glory, and, with His loving voice, whispered it to ourselves alone. Then, Christ having spoken to us in the word, we close the door and kneel before His mercy seat in prayer, and pour our supplications into His ear; and, as the Holy Spirit indites these petitions, we speak, not as one who speaks into the air, but as one who lies in the bosom of his friend and touches his very heart. Brother, do you know the difference between praying and saying prayers? How many times, in your closet, have you gone through the form of prayer, and risen from your knees, feeling that the words never rose above your head—that they were dissipated into thin air, and you had no hope to overtake them as they melted into space? And then you have knelt again and have spoken your words of prayer, and you felt the very breath of your Friend upon your cheek, and your lips pressing against His ear, and there was within you a consciousness of personal communion with a real, living, personal Being. Surely, then, if faith presents Christ to us as one with whom we are in actual correspondence, with whom we hold a communion as real as any that we hold with a friend on the earth, in the enjoyment of this confidential friendship, we are able still to say, with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest that we love thee."

IV. FAITH ENABLES US TO APPROPRIATE THE GLORIOUS RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST, WHICH BECOMES A BOND OF SYMPATHY AND OF LOVE BETWEEN OURSELVES AND OUR LORD. It is upon the ground of this righteousness that our Head stands accepted before the Father. It was by virtue of this righteousness that He burst the seal of the grave and rose triumphant over death. It was by the merit of this righteousness that He ascended through the clouds into the heavens. It was by the force of this righteousness that He took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and gave public proof of His mediatorial rule, when, on the day of Pentecost, He shed down the Holy Spirit with

power upon the Apostles. With this glorious righteousness He appears before His Father and before the holy angels, rejoicing in it as the crown of His glory. And now we, by faith, having this righteousness and making it our own, go up into the presence of the same glory, and feel that there is a bond between us and Christ; we rejoicing in the same righteousness with Himself, and feeling that it constitutes our glory even as it constitutes His own. By virtue, therefore, of the sympathy created through the possession of this righteousness, we are able to say, "thou art the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely." "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

V. LASTLY, FAITH PRESENTS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST SO THAT WE REJOICE IN THE SENSE OF THE PARDON OF OUR SINS AND IN ALL THE BENEFITS OF GRACE WHICH HE CONFERS UPON US. While sin lies upon the conscience unpardoned, we are averse to thoughts of God. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." The Apostle declares of the wicked, that they "do not like to retain God in their knowledge." All thoughts of God, because they are thoughts of perfect holiness, are distasteful to the sinner; who feels that holiness arrayed against him, and that it must draw the sword of justice and execute upon him his doom. Under the pressure of the curse, man, instinctively and with a total aversion, turns away from the contemplation of God; but when the Holy Spirit seals a gracious pardon upon the conscience, it becomes delightful to behold "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" to see, in our incarnate Redeemer, "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person." Do you know what it is to love a being who has pardoned you? And when the sense of gratitude springs up in the soul for all the benefits of redeeming grace, do you know anything of the joy which comes from loving the Savior, who has bestowed all this upon you? If not, I tell you it is your loss. It is your loss if you have not Him before your eye who, in the one hand, holds the gift of a full pardon, and, in the other, hangs out before you the crown of life which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to them that love Him at the last day. In the exercise of gratitude for saving grace, in the joy which springs from the sense of pardon sealed upon an accusing conscience, we are constrained to exclaim, with Peter in the text, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that we love thee."

Now, my friends, I draw these thoughts to a practical close by one or two reflections:

I. THE FIRST IS THAT GOD HAS MADE A WONDERFUL PROVISION IN THE GOSPEL OF HIS SON FOR THE EXERCISE, AND THE GRATIFICATION WITHIN US, OF THIS PRINCIPLE OF LOVE. Surely, God made us to love. He gives to us a heart which is capable of it, and then He places us in the bosom of relations which draw it out. It is the first lesson learned by the infant. Did you never bend over your own babe, as it hangs on its mother's breast and drinks the nourishment of its mother's life into its own form, wonderingly turning up into that mother's face its blue eye, in which you begin to see the sparkle of intelligence, gazing and gazing into that mother's face, and learning, as it looks, the first great lesson of infantile love? After a little, when it turns from that mother to your manly arms, cooing with its slender voice and purring with its tiny hands, is it not in the school of love? Are you, father and mother, not teaching it the lessons of affection? With its expanding powers, it spreads its young heart over the whole circle of brothers and sisters within the sacred enclosure of the family; and, overleaping those narrow boundaries, it seeks to love neighbors and friends and further kindred—until, the waves spreading from the centre in circles over the sea of life, this love takes hold upon one's country; expanding, at last, into that broad philanthropy which takes up the whole race in the bonds of a common brotherhood. Why, what are all these earthly relations but the successive rounds of the ladder by which we ascend higher and higher, until we approach the great God, whom we are to love with all the heart and with all the soul and with all the strength and with all the mind? What is the family, and what is our country, and what is the wide earth upon which we live, but the schools into which we are introduced, that we may learn the divine art of loving, so that it shall become at last the mastering habit of the soul? The impressions are stereotyped forever: so that, having learned what it is to love on earth, and how enjoyment comes to us in the exercise of love, we may at length, transformed by grace, stand amidst the angels in Heaven, forever loving Him that hath redeemed us, and made us kings and priests unto God in His temple above. To use an exquisite thought, first indicated to me by the most suggestive of all writers, Isaac Taylor—and which I can only reproduce in substance, not in language—love is not that material thing which you cut into pieces and distribute around, giving a little to one and a little to another, until the whole is exhausted; but it is that immaterial, spiritual thing, the whole of which you give to one, and yet have the whole of it left to give to another. Thus, through all the circles of human relationship, we love with all the wealth of love with

which a gracious God may have endowed us. Here is a mother with six children around her knee: does she love each child with one-sixth of her heart, so that, when it is distributed over the entire circle, her whole capacity for love is exhausted? Or does she not love each child with the whole of her mother's heart? And then, having loved all the six, with all the heart that she has, has she not the whole heart left to give to him whom she knew and whom she loved before she knew or loved any of the six? Ah! these earthly relations never can absorb the love of which we are capable. We love wife and children and friends and country and the race with all the love that God has given to us; and yet it overpasses all these earthly measures, and longs for a receptacle into which it can pour its entire flood forever. Just like this bold river which rolls by and almost around our city; which, in its descent from the distant North, sends off its streams upon the right hand and upon the left, watering the plain on either bank; then, gathering its waters back into its own current, and rolling on, chafing within its banks, increasing in bulk and increasing in power, until at last it disembogues into the gulf, and sweeps on into the broad ocean that is beyond. So do the affections of the human heart overpass the home, overpass the country, overpass the world, sweeping on, chafing in their banks: and they must at last have an ocean into which to empty, even the bosom of God. In the infiniteness of His goodness, God presents Himself as the eternal and complete object upon which these affections of ours shall terminate, and always is He to be seen in Jesus Christ. Always, through eternity, are we to grow into Christ, to be assimilated to Christ, to be changed into His image from glory to glory, as here on earth from grace to grace. Here we know and are assimilated to Him as the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief; having fellowship with Him in His humiliation, in His shame, in His reproach, in His dishonor, in his death. Then, rising with Him in His own glorious resurrection, we are to grow into Him forever and forever, and be associated with Him forever and forever, in His exaltation; rising from one plane to a plane that is higher, and having a larger view of the infinite that is in God; and then springing from those higher planes to peaks that are loftier still, and having a broader landscape, and beholding Him in the further stretch of His boundless nature, as it spreads itself out before us, boundless and boundless everywhere. Through all eternity we shall explore God, beholding in Him the infinite and the holy, the beautiful and the true, the good and the right, God over all and blessed forever. And still the infinite in God stretches out before us after an

eternity has been spent, to occupy the eternities that are to come. Oh! the provision in the gospel of Christ to meet the yearnings of love! Do you and I thus love God in Christ? or are we binding down this elastic heart to the poor and perishing objects of the earth? I know how sweet it is to love those whom God gives to us in the tender relations of the home; but, my hearers, they die, and we have to go in our tears and hunt for them in the darkness of the grave! But God lives—God the good, God the wise, God the holy, God the true, God glorious in His majesty, always offering Himself to the embrace of our affections, our inheritance and our portion throughout eternity. I am sorry for you, my hearer, to the very core of my heart, in the depths of all the pity of which I am capable—I am sorry for you if you cannot say, with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." You have not the field upon which your affections can expand until you find yourself embraced in the arms of everlasting love and glory.

II. Last of all—for I pretermit other thoughts which I had intended to present—IF IT BE SO SWEET TO LOVE CHRIST ON EARTH, WHAT WILL IT BE TO LOVE HIM IN HEAVEN? for here we see "as through a glass, darkly," but there "face to face." Then we shall know even as we are known; then faith and hope will have passed away, but charity, the greatest of the three, will abide—faith swallowed up in sight, and hope lost in possession. But love will remain, eternal in man because eternal in God—love, the very name by which the saint in glory is described, as it is the name by which the glorious God is revealed. In the glory and expansion of that love, it might seem as though at last the heaven of heavens could not contain us; but there will be God, in whose circle we shall continue to move, and we shall enjoy the possession and the glorious sense of possession of His love forever. How sweet it is to love! How sweet it is to be loved! How hard it is when the knife cuts the tie by which we are held to those whom we love! My brethren, this is the joy of the upper home which is offered to you through the Savior—always to know the blessedness of love, and always to enjoy the consciousness of being loved—of loving a love that is divine, and of being held in the arms and folded in the embrace of Him whose sweetest title is that He is LOVE.

VI.

CHRIST'S PERTURBATION.

A COMMUNION DISCOURSE.

ST. JOHN xii, 27:—"*Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.*"

This world is a world of grief, and its history a record of sorrow. The new born infant begins its career with a cry of distress, premonitory of all it must suffer between the cradle and the grave; and the moans we are accustomed to hear in the chamber of sickness, show how hard it is to die. To many, life is a large inheritance of anguish: as, for example, the martyrs, who "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy." [Hebrews xi, 36:37:38.] But among these forms of suffering there rises up one before us, pre eminent above the rest; whose style and title is, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"—"His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." [Isaiah lii, 14; ibid liii, 3.] There is a pathos, a simplicity and dignity in the Scripture narrative of Christ's sufferings, such an absence of all exaggeration, as is at once attractive and commanding. How pathetic the cry put into His lips by ancient prophecy! "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." [Psalm lxix, 1:2.] How full of melancholy is His declaration, "Reproach hath broken my heart: and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." [Psalm lxix, 20.] It was in the foresight of these sufferings that the text presents Christ in this perturbation of His spirit—"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but

for this cause came I unto this hour." We are met, to-day, that we may have fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, and remember Him in His death. Let us put off the shoes from our feet, and behold the angel of the Lord in the flame of fire, in the midst of the bush. Let us, with cautious and reverent hands, lift the veil from those terrible sufferings which once made the rocks to rend, and broke the slumbers even of the dead.

Ah! it was not the anticipation of corporeal anguish which wrung this expression of amazement from the Master's lips. It was not the scourging; it was not the crown of thorns; it was not the burthen of His cross, as He reels beneath its weight up the steeps of Calvary; it was not the cruel spikes, nor the soldier's spear; nor the raging thirst—represented as one of the peculiar tortures of this mode of death—that wrenched from His lips this mournful complaint. There have been martyrs who have suffered superior tortures even to these—martyrs who have been broken upon the wheel, whose limbs have been torn from their very sockets—martyrs who have been dislocated in every joint, upon the rack—martyrs who have mounted to heaven in a chariot of fire—who yet have borne the extreme of physical anguish, not only with composure, but with a holy joy, counting it their glory that they were accounted thus worthy to suffer for Christ. And shall the Perfect Man, in the foresight merely of physical sufferings, lose his equipoise? Shall He exhibit, in the foresight only of physical pain, less fortitude than many have shown who have been strengthened with His strength, and, without a murmur, have gone up with their testimony and laid it before the throne above? No, my hearers, we must pass by the physical torture; we must go down into the darkness of our Lord's spiritual anguish; "now is my *soul* troubled." He is anticipating the hour when, in the language of the twenty-second Psalm, He exclaims, "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels." It will be profitable for us, as the theme of our meditations this morning, to ascertain what are the elements of the Lord's amazement of soul, here so pathetically described—"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?"

I. I MENTION, AS THE FIRST ELEMENT OF THE PERTURBATION OF OUR LORD, AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY UNDER THE TRUST WHICH HE HAD ASSUMED. We recognize amongst ourselves those to be the most worthy of responsibility who the most feel its pressure. There are men in every age who rush into office without appreciating

its solemnity—men without sensibility and without conscience, prepared to take all responsibilities upon themselves, merely perverting these to private ends; and they are always, through all history, the open scourges of their race. But the men who deserve to bear trusts in life, are the men who, under the pressure of those trusts, shrink even from the honors which accompany them. Here is the physician, bending over the bed of his patient in the extremity of mortal disease: how his hand trembles as he administers the potion—filled with a sense of awe, because the issues of life and death are, in that instant, depending upon his skill! There is the advocate at the bar, looking upon his client pale with fear at his side: how he rises with dread, lest he should prove inadequate to the defence! How often would the judge, seated upon the bench, lay down the spotless ermine with which he is clothed, that he may escape the severe pain which he encounters in the equal administration of the law! Nay, my brethren, it is not necessary to go into these higher spheres to find illustrations of that responsibility which rests with dreadful pressure upon the soul. In our domestic circles, when we are happy amidst the endearments of home; when our little ones gather, in their frolic and in their glee, around our firesides; and we open the chambers of the heart, and let all the love flow out in the joy which they provoke: how suddenly the stern thought overshadows us, that here, in the midst of all this pure joy, we encounter the fearful responsibility of training these young immortals, and, whether we have the wisdom for it or not, are compelled to shape their destinies for the world to come. Ah! the responsibilities of life press with their heavy weight upon the human heart, wherever we turn! And, in proportion to the perfection of our nature, just in so far as our sensibilities and our affections are educated—and we are brought in equal symmetry and proportion to fulfil the functions to which we are called—do we, by reason of that very education, shrink from our trusts.

And now, what is the trust which is assumed by the Lord Jesus Christ, which, in the anticipation, throws its sorrow upon His heart? He stands upon the earth to represent the sinner. "He was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." [Galatians iv, 4:5; II Corinthians v, 21.] Here He stands upon the earth before His Father and before the holy angels, to represent sin in all its vileness, in all its guilt, in all its shame; and the responsibility of that trust was enough, of itself, to crush any human heart into the dust. Then He stood upon this earth to represent the

purity and the justice and the truth of Almighty God, in their dealings with the sinner: standing here upon this platform, erected expressly for this design, that He may, in the shape of the creature, with all the attributes of the creature, represent the tremendous perfections of the great and awful God—represent the divine holiness in all its splendor, the divine justice in its inexorable demands, the divine truth as it holds fast to its solemn declaration, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." And, mark, the Lord Jesus Christ comes, not merely to be the expounder of these divine attributes to the creature—for it is an inconceivably shallow view of the adorable Redeemer to regard Him only as a prophet, standing upon the earth with simple and cold words, to expound the Deity to man—but He stands upon this mountain of sacrifice and bares His bosom to all the bolts of the Father's vengeance; kneels upon the mount of sacrifice and opens His heart, as He hears the voice of that Father exclaiming from His throne, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." [Zechariah xiii, 7.] The peculiar function of Jesus Christ upon the earth was that He should actually bear, in His mysterious person, in their full outworking and activity, all that the attributes of God could possibly express. It was not merely in language to say to us that God is just, and that God is true, and that God is holy: but it was that God might work out His justice, work out His holiness, and work out His truth, in all the deep and bitter experiences of His spirit. Brethren, God has never revealed Himself by simple didactic exposition of His perfections. He is not satisfied with sitting upon His throne, and there, in audible voice, proclaiming to the creatures what are the perfections of His nature. His plan has been, in nature and in grace, to reveal them in their effective operation: He speaks, and it is done; He commands, and it stands fast. As the Creator, He put all His attributes into action; and you behold the entire Deity, in the activity and strength of His nature, by the word producing worlds. This mode of the divine exposition holds in the sphere of grace, as in the sphere of nature. When God would show His justice, His holiness, His truth, His mercy, His compassion and His love, He does it, not in language, but by deeds—by producing these energies of His own nature, and putting them into play. He sends His own Son from His own bosom, to stand upon the earth as the only Being capable of sustaining upon His person these amazing energies of the everlasting God. Oh! my brethren, what a responsibility, when Christ stands upon the earth, a spectacle, not only to man, but to the entire universe! As the

angels, from the battlements of heaven, look down upon Him with feelings of amazement and of awe, they behold the only Being who could sustain the justice of God without being consumed; the only Being who can reveal, by actual suffering, the whole passionate love of the Father for the guilty and lost of our race. Under the sense of this responsibility, when the burthen rests upon Him only in the anticipation of it, He exclaims in the text, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour."

It may, perhaps, occur to some of you that as the Lord Jesus Christ was divine, it was easy to sustain this pressure, and, therefore, you are surprised at the amazement which he exhibits. But this responsibility was borne in His human nature. It is as man that he pours out His soul like water, and His heart is melted like wax within His bowels. For He was made of a woman, made under the law; and as made of the woman, the woman's seed, He must encounter these dread responsibilities. There is this antithesis in human experience: that trusts rise up before the eye in their solemn grandeur, and fill the soul with a holy joy in their contemplation—and yet those trusts which fill the soul with the measure of their own greatness, do sometimes oppress it with fear. It is, indeed, grand to live in order that we may sustain responsibilities. It is a solemn joy to stand beneath the burdens of life, to do the great works which the Master has commissioned us to achieve. And yet there are seasons when we are so conscious of our insufficiency in ourselves, that we would gladly strip ourselves of the joy and the glory that come from trusteeship, in order to escape the responsibility which consumes us. Here, then, is the first element which I mention as entering into our Lord's amazement in the text—the overwhelming sense of responsibility, in view of the mediatorial trust which He had assumed.

II. IN THE SECOND PLACE, THERE WAS GREAT HORROR OF SOUL, IN VIEW OF DEATH AS THE PENALTY OF THE LAW. The dread of death is natural, simply because it formed no part of the constitution which God originally gave to us. Whatever belongs to our nature God makes pleasant to us. Hence sleep, the twin-sister of death, its very image and reflection, steals, with its gentle influence, over the body, putting sense by sense to rest, and limb by limb; and yet we experience, in our surrender to repose, nothing but enjoyment, because, from the first, it was a part of the constitution he gave to us, that man's body should be refreshed by sleep. And so food, by which we replenish the flux and waste of these particles of the body, always comes as a source

of enjoyment to us in our healthy and normal condition. It may, therefore, be accepted as a law, that whatever God ordained as part of our original constitution, He, in His wonderful goodness, makes a source of gratification. But death is horrible, because it has supervened upon that constitution. According to the testimony of the Apostle, "sin entered into the world, and death by sin"—coming in surreptitiously through sin, which opens the door for its entrance—"sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." [Romans v, 12.] We can have no sympathy with the flippant tones in which men sometimes talk of death: affecting a hard stoicism, and looking upon it only as inevitable fate; and, because it is a doom from which none can escape, shrugging the shoulders, and speaking about it as mere destiny. Be it destiny, or what you will, it never comes upon man save as the last enemy; and no man whose nature has not been dreadfully warped, can contemplate it with any other feelings than those of recoil. And yet no one of our race, perhaps, ever passed through death, encountering all that is dreadful in it as the penalty of the law. As to the Lord's people, the sting of death is taken away, and they all die with greater or less degrees of comfort and of peace. There are men who rise even to rapture; who anticipate the song which can be sung, in its highest emphasis, only in the morning of the resurrection: "Oh, death! where is thy sting? Oh, grave! where is thy victory?" "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." [I Corinthians xv, 55:56:57.] Multitudes of the redeemed, who pass through the agonies of nature's dissolution, exclaim in the exquisite language of Adrian's ancient hymn,

"Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
O the pain, the bliss of dying!"

As to these, whatever be the emotions with which they depart from life, the dread and the sting and the terror and the anguish of death, as the penalty of the law, are effectually removed. Even in regard to the wicked, who die in their sins, God, in His wonderful mercy, does not allow the full terror of death, in its penal aspect, to take hold upon the conscience. Multitudes are surprised by it, never knowing the short passage through which they pass to meet the realities of another world. Others are racked by pains and disease, the very form of the disease oftentimes blunting the mental faculties, and rendering them incapable of exertion. And so, in one way or in another, even the wicked pass through death, and do not experience all that is terrible and dreadful in it.

But what I wish you to observe, in contrast with all this, is that the Lord Jesus Christ was the only member of the human family who was born expressly of a woman to pass beneath that penalty, and to undergo death as such. He was the only member of our race who was born expressly that He might die; and who was born, not simply to die, but to die that kind of death which the law threatens against the guilty. So that He, in passing through it, experienced what it is impossible that we should ever know—all that was terrible, all that was inconceivably dreadful to the thought, in the death which He underwent. He dies under the Father's judicial displeasure, under the anathema, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." He dies, as the substitute of sinners whom the law condemns. The cup is put into His hands by His Father's hand, and He must drink that cup even to its dregs. Therefore, nothing that is awful in death was eliminated from the experience of our blessed Lord; and nothing consoled Him but the certainty of His resurrection: "My flesh," says He, "shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." [Acts ii, 26:27.] Ah! my hearers, there was this horror of soul in the Lord Jesus, as He recoils from the death which the law so sternly inflicts. There was felt by Him what none of us, through His infinite grace, shall ever be allowed to know. This constitutes the second element in the amazement that is expressed in the text.

III. THERE WAS IN CHRIST A RECOIL OF SPIRIT FROM THE SINS WHICH WERE LAID UPON HIM, THE PUNISHMENT OF WHICH HE WAS CALLED TO BEAR. I am afraid many of us have superficial views of the sin-bearing of Jesus Christ, as though it were simply a fictitious reckoning of our sins to Him. The language, both of the Old Testament and of the New, in reference to the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, never can be exhausted until you come to see that Jesus Christ did stand in the exact stead of His people; that, literally, He bore our sins in His own body; that our iniquities were laid upon Him, so that, by His stripes, we might be healed. He so assumed our sins as to feel the burthen of them, and all the shame and reproach and agony and anguish. All that sin can possibly effect in the consciousness of guilt, entered into the experience of the Lord Jesus Christ; "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin." Standing under His Father's law as a reputed sinner, the whole weight of a world's guilt lay upon His heart, and thoroughly penetrated into His experience. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ was, in His sorrow, a pre-eminent sufferer, by reason of the weight and

shame and reproach of these sins as they were laid upon Him: "Reproach hath broken my heart." Therefore it was, that, when they began to break the legs of those that were crucified upon Calvary, He was found already dead. The reproach that fell upon Him as He was the substitute for the guilty and the lost had broken His heart.

This gathers emphasis when you remember that Christ, as a man, was perfectly sinless; and hence there must have been an instinctive recoil from all the sin which He was called to assume. Why, my brethren, those who are in any degree sanctified upon the earth feel the pain of the sins with which they are sometimes brought in contact. These oaths which fall from the lips of profane men, as every day they tread the glory of the blessed God whom we love and serve beneath their tongues—how they smite upon the Christian's ear and make him sad. Although he has no responsibility for the sin, yet there is within him, through divine grace, an exquisite sensibility, so that he cannot even come into contact with the sins of others without experiencing the recoil. When, at times, there is spread out before the eye some enormous transgression, some form of sin, in which God's law is most outrageously broken, I suppose all of us have been conscious of the soul's drawing in upon itself with a feeling of horror, which finds no language that can possibly describe its emotion. How, then, must it have been with the Perfect Man—with Him who was holy, harmless and undefiled—when the sins of all His people, in all the generations that have lived or shall yet live upon this globe until the consummation of time, were, in solid bulk, laid upon Him, that He should bear them and atone for them? They are sins from which we recoil in our thought, and yet He must bear them in His own body, upon the tree, in order to a satisfactory expiation of the same. And in the anticipation of all this sin which He must really assume, you can understand some of the amazement of Christ's spirit when he exclaims, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?"

As a branch of the same thought, remember that Christ not only bore the sins, but also the sorrows of His people. "Surely," says the Prophet, "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." The two are tied together by a bond which cannot be broken. Sorrow is born of sin; and while sin remains, the sorrow must abide. Therefore, he who went down into the depths of human sin, went down also into the depths of human sorrow. He, according to the language which we have already cited, "was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He knew the sorrow just exactly as it sprung out of the sin. He knew

the sorrow in all its terrible connection with the sin of which it was born. He knew sorrow in the absolute essence in which that sorrow is condensed. He knew sorrow exactly in its original force, and without any of the abatements which lessen it to us. Ah! my brethren, there are times in our bereavement when we say that we are *alone*. Oh! the utter desolateness of the spirit, when you come back from the graveyard where you have buried your dead, and as you walk through the chambers of your house, and your eye rests upon all the memorials of your dead! Oh, Lord! Thou knowest, and Thy suffering children understand, that desolateness of soul when, in the absence of those whom they loved, they feel that they are ALONE. But when was there ever loneliness like the loneliness of Christ? Forsaken by His disciples, rejected by the earth, cast out of Heaven, forsaken by His Father—nailed up, as it were, against the wall of the sky, between the heavens and the earth, His feet not touching the one nor His head the other—hung up, a mournful spectacle of loneliness and woe, before the gaze of the assembled universe, as though cast forth of all worlds, because He there lay under the anathema and curse of the Father—and even that Father, in whose bosom He had always lain, turning away His face, and provoking the bitter cry with which His heart was broken, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Here is loneliness of which one can speak; or, rather, it is loneliness of which one cannot speak. He bore that sorrow, as He bore the sin that produced it; and hence the perturbation and amazement of His spirit when He said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour."

IV. YOU FIND, AS AN ELEMENT OF OUR LORD'S DISTRESS, HIS ANTICIPATION OF CONFLICT WITH THE POWERS OF DARKNESS. It was an old quarrel, long ago begun, away back in the far eternity, before the sons of God shouted for joy, or sun or moon or stars were created; when Lucifer, the son of the morning, lifted the standard of rebellion against the glorious throne, and was cast out with all his allies, and, as Jude describes it, "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Adam's fall in the Garden of Eden, under the temptation of the original adversary, was but the continuance of that quarrel. And here this earth of ours is thrown into space, and fitted up by the hand of God as the theatre upon which might be fought out to its awful conclusion the mighty battle between holiness and sin, between the powers of the adversary and the omnipotence of God.

My hearers, it is the significance of this earth, which gives the clue to all the interpretation of earth's history, that this globe is the theatre, the world of worlds, the erected platform where, before the whole universe, might be solved forever and for all the worlds, and for all beings in all worlds, through all the eternities that are to come, the awful problem of sin, and how the God of holiness and the God of justice shall deal with it. Satan deals with his compeers in the heavens above, when he enters into the conspiracy against the holiness and power of God there; and he deals with a being inf rior to him in dignity and glory, when he whispered his temptation into the ear of our first mother and brought our guilty parents into sin. Now, he has more than his equal; now there comes out of the bosom of eternity—now, from the very arms of the adorable Trinity, springs forth the Conqueror, God's eternal Son, made of a woman, "found in fashion as a man," put here, a man, upon the earth that He might stand face to face with the devil, that he might enter hand to hand in conflict with the devil, that he might wrest from the devil his sceptre and overset his throne—wrench from him his usurped dominion, and bind him a captive in chains, and hurl him into the pit of despair, built expressly for him and for his angels. For, my hearers, while it is stated in Scripture that "the wicked will be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God," God did not make hell at first for man. The fearful sentence proclaimed against the guilty in the day of judgment is, "Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, *prepared for the devil and his angels.*"* And now, think you, that when the conflict between the serpent and the woman's seed draws to its close, our blessed Redeemer does not, in the holiness of His spirit, recoil from the direful contact? Do we not know something of the terribleness of striving with the devil? Have you no acquaintance with Satanic agency and Satanic power? Did he never, in any moment, assail you with awful blasphemies? Did he never come, at moments of surprise, and inject into your mind horrid thoughts of God and of yourself, and fill the whole screen before your eye with images of appetite and lust, to debauch the conscience and make you utterly vile? And as we advance in the divine life, and are more conformed to the image of God, how much more dreadful become these conflicts with the adversary! And now Jesus, the pure and spotless, in his divine blessedness as Son of God, in all the purity and sinlessness of His perfect humanity, must undergo this conflict with Satan. The struggle, begun in the tempta-

*Stier in "The Words of the Lord Jesus."

tion, must be finished in Gethsemane and upon the cross. He finds that adversary gathering his hosts and marshalling them into battle: hence, in the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm, He says, "They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them." Think you that, in the anticipation of this conflict with the powers of darkness, the Savior could not well exclaim, "Now is my soul troubled?"

V. I mention but one element more in our Lord's perturbation. I can only name it, for there is no language in which to describe it. IT WAS THE SENSE OF THE FATHER'S WRATH—HIS ANTICIPATION OF THE SUSPENSION OF THE FATHER'S LOVE. It does seem to me that we vacate the whole atonement if the Lord Jesus Christ did not bear the penalty of the broken law—not its equivalent, not something which, more or less, nearly approaches it. He was made a curse for us, for it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Awful mystery as it is, the Lord Jesus Christ did go down into the very bowels of the curse; He did endure the displeasure of the Father; He did bear the essence of the penalty; and He signalizes it in that cry of last distress which pours from His lips, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" How mysteriously that wrath pressed upon His spirit in the very moment when the Father most loved Him! When He is engaged in the most sublime act of obedience to that Father's will, the Father must turn away His face in judicial anger and leave Him alone; for He must tread the winepress of His wrath alone, and of all the people there shall be none with Him. My hearers, it is not in this world that we shall know what the wrath of God is; and may God save you and me from ever knowing it in the world to come! It is not this side of that fearful pit where He will forever punish the wicked, that we can comprehend what is implied in the word. But whatever there is in that wrath, Christ endured. Well might He, in His human nature, recoil from the prospect of that suffering, and say, in the language of the text, "Father, save me from this hour!" Beautiful expression of the truth of our Lord's human nature, to give out the cry that calls for relief in the anticipation of suffering! "Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour."

And now, my brethren, as we gather around the table to hold fellowship with Christ in these sufferings, and to remember Him in His death that I may not disturb your meditations at that sacred moment, let me

close this discourse with just two reflections, which you may profitably revolve as you are seated at His board.

1. ALL THESE SUFFERINGS JESUS CHRIST ENDURED FOR US, AND THEY ARE THE EVIDENCES OF HIS LOVE TO US. Greater love can no man show than that a man lay down his life for his friend. Ah! for his friend! Human love does not go beyond that pitch, to die for one's friend; but God commendeth His love to us in that "Christ died for us." He that came on the earth, the just for the unjust, and voluntarily passed beneath these woes, holds out from His cross the evidence of His love; and He asks you and me to gather around his table to-day, and to behold Him crucified in the midst of us, that we may know the greatness of that love. He spreads before us, as he spread before Thomas, His hands, and says, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side," and know how much I have loved you. We love Him because He has loved us; and these terrible sufferings are the proof that He loved us even unto death.

2. THEN WE SEE IN THESE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST THE AWFUL DEMERIT OF SIN. We have light thrown upon it which enables us to abhor it; and, in our abhorrence of it, to bring it to this table to-day and confess it; and then, as we lay our sins anew at the feet of Jesus, ask Him in what way we shall reciprocate His love. As we confess upon these emblems, which represent His body broken and His blood shed, He not only shows His love, but asks for an expression of our own; and if we love Him, let us tell Him that love. In our humility and penitence, with all the sense of shame which we may feel, let us pour into His secret ear the whispers of our love, as we gather around His table to-day; and then, as we rise from it, let us remember that as Christ shows His love to us through death, we are to show our love to Him through life. Because He loves us, He dies for us; and because we love Him, we live for Him; "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." This is the proof of our love which Christ asks—not that we shall die, but that we shall live—live His life, and show the power of that life in the fruits of holiness which we produce.

CHRIST'S AGONY.

He knelt, the Savior knelt and prayed,
  When but his Father's eye
Looked through the lonely garden's shade,
  On that dread agony;
The Lord of all above, beneath,
Was bowed with sorrow unto death.

The sun set in a fearful hour,
  The stars might well grow dim,
When this mortality had power
  So to o'ershadow Him!
That He who gave man's breath, might know
The very depths of human woe.

He proved them all; the doubt, the strife,
  The faint, perplexing dread,
The mists that hang o'er parting life,
  All gathered round His head;
And the Deliverer knelt to pray;
Yet passed it not, that cup, away.

It passed not, though the stormy wave
  Had sunk beneath His tread;
It passed not, though to Him the grave
  Had yielded up its dead.
But there was sent Him from on high,
A gift of strength for man to die.

And was the sinless thus beset
  With anguish and dismay?
How may we meet our conflict yet,
  In the dark, narrow way?
Through Him—through Him, that path who trod;
  Save or we perish, Son of God.

VII.

HOLDEN WITH THE CORDS OF SIN.

PROVERBS v, 22:—"*His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.*"

This passage sets forth a principle of tremendous import. If I seek this morning to address it to the understanding, it is only that I may gain a vantage ground, from which to make the stronger appeal to the conscience. The principle is simply this: that continuance in sin finally and utterly exhausts the recuperative power of virtue; so that the man is reduced at length to the fatal necessity of sinning. Do not be startled at the word, as though I were loosening the foundations of all morality, or providing a bomb-proof in which the sinner may shelter himself against all sense of responsibility: for it is a necessity which does not absolve from obligation, being not imposed from without, but entirely of the sinner's own creation; and is, therefore, the highest demonstration of his guilt. We have only to look around us in life to behold melancholy instances of this truth. We see the debauchee, so wedded to his lusts as to be at length incapable of chastity; the inebriate, so fascinated by his cups as to be incapable of sobriety; the covetous man, so infatuated by his gains as to be incapable of generosity; the revengeful man, so much under the control of his malignity as to be incapable of forgiveness. "His iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins." This does not mean simply that punishment will follow on the heel of transgression. That is true, but not the truth which is affirmed here. It is, rather, that a man's sins shall be wrapped around him like fetters of brass, so that he shall be utterly unable to break away. The argument of this discourse will be exceedingly simple, consisting only in pointing out two or three of the laws of our nature, which, if not contravened by grace, inevitably conduct to this result.

And the first of these is *the law of exercise.* We are endowed at birth with certain powers, corporeal, intellectual, moral; which, in the

first instance, are mere capacities, until, by exercise and use, they have been developed and strengthened. The infant has all the sinews and muscles which are necessary for motion and for labor; but, in the beginning, they are capable of nothing but involuntary contraction. Very soon, however, begins the unconscious education of these, by which they are brought under the control of the will; until, hardened by use, those muscles, which lie flexile and unstrung upon the arm of the infant, become the cords of steel which line the brawny arm of the laborer. Now let us suppose what may be impossible in reality, but which may be imagined for the sake of illustration. Let us suppose an infant in whom this process of development never began, lying passive in its cradle from infancy to maturity. Is it not perfectly obvious that, having never moved a muscle or a limb, he will exhibit as complete imbecility as at the moment of his birth?

In like manner our intellectual faculties all exist, but, in the first instance, perfectly dormant. The powers of observation, of comparison, of judgment and of memory, all exist, but, so to speak, in the undeveloped germ. It is curious to see how that mighty thing which we call mind lies at first perfectly smothered under the flesh, until the senses open one by one and bring it into contact with the world without; which, like a charged battery, by shock after shock, startles it into action, and puts all its powers into play. The infant makes his first observation, and then his second; he institutes his first comparison between the two; he frames from that comparison his first judgment; and, by endlessly repeating these processes, memory at length lays up in its storehouse the materials of knowledge, upon which it will draw afterwards at will. Any one of these powers which I have mentioned, may be cultivated to an indefinite extent. The memory may be so enlarged as that it shall go, with perfect ease, through the most protracted and complex argument without fatigue. The sensibility and the taste may be rendered so acute, that they shall put forth, at all moments, their feelers upon the first approach of anything that is beautiful and grand. And the imagination, that great creative faculty in man, coins the hints which it gathers, through sense, from the world without, and builds these worlds of its own—worlds which are so full of enchantment, that we revel in them in all the intoxication of delight. If these powers be, by severe discipline, trained in their symmetry and proportion, there are formed at length those intellectual giants, such as a Bacon, or a Newton, or a Milton, or a Locke, or a Descartes, or a Laplace. Now, let us suppose in this case, as in the other, the infant,

not only exempt from that severe discipline by which it is trained to greatness, but never to have entered upon this process of development at all—an infant that never made its first observation, having nothing which it could compare, and laying, therefore, no foundation upon which to frame a judgment. Is it not perfectly clear that even up to manhood, the mind, thus undeveloped, will die out at length in hopeless and pitiful idiotcy?

Now, my hearers, carry the principle over into the sphere of morals and religion. Let a man, through a long term of years, surrender himself to a particular vice; or, if you please, give the rein to all his appetites and passions, as they are chained together: and, under the operation of the same law, must not all that is evil in his nature grow at length to preternatural proportions and overmaster the soul? On the other hand, the counteracting traits, through simple neglect, dwarf and fade gradually away, until, finally, they drop out of view. So that, under the double operation, the evil principles in our nature become the giants that take us up in their grasp, and we are utterly incapable of breaking from their restraints. "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins." Here, then, is one law competent of itself to work out the sad result of the text.

But consider next *the law of association.* You are all familiar with the operation of this principle, though you may never have attended to its philosophy. You walk, for example, in the streets of a foreign city —it may be Paris, or London, or St. Petersburg; your eye falls casually upon the face of a stranger who bears a close resemblance to some dear but distant friend. How quickly does the mind, by the law of association, revert to that friend! In shorter time than it takes me to describe it in words, you call to remembrance the many kindnesses which have been reciprocated between you, and the thousand scenes of sorrow and of joy through which you have passed together. Nay, not only do you reproduce the naked events of the past, but you recall the emotions of love and hatred, of grief and pleasure, of resentment and forgiveness, which formerly agitated your bosoms. You wake up that past instinct with its old life, and, in a few seconds, you live that life over again. It is just this principle of suggestion which binds our experiences together, so that life is not broken into fleeting moments, but flows before us with a continuous current. It is just this principle of suggestion that, binding into unity all the parts of our prolonged life, renders us beings of progress. By means of this law of association, you call up the recol-

lections of the past, and blend them with the experiences of the present, and, by perceiving the uniformity between the two, you lay your plans for the distant future; and thus man becomes that mysterious being who can, at one and the same moment, occupy three separate worlds. Standing upon the isthmus of the present, his executive thoughts are busy with what is immediately before him; by the power of memory he stretches over the whole continent of the past; whilst, by anticipation, he casts himself into the cloudy future, sends his pioneering thoughts in advance, and blazes out the path in that future which he is heretofore to tread. Mysterious being! who can stand thus upon this

> "Vain, weak-built isthmus, that doth proudly rise
> Up betwixt two eternities"

There is no thought more startling which I can announce this morning, than that in every moment of every hour of every day, in every act, in every word, in every thought, in every desire, we are unconsciously weaving for ourselves this network of association, which covers the whole area of our life; the invisible threads of which are faithful clues to memory, to guide its trembling hands along the mazes of the past.

Now apply this principle to the case before us. Let a man, through a long period of his life, have no associations except with sin: and in what a web is he at length entangled! And when the moment of conviction arrives, and he becomes aware of his peril, and seeks to rend the network in which he is enclosed, he finds himself like the lion of the forest when he is caught in the toils of the hunter: his very exertions drawing only the closer around him the meshes of that network, and, in the frenzy of his efforts to be extricated, wrapping more and more around him the folds of this web, until, caught in it as in a straight jacket, his mighty limbs are absolutely pinioned to his side, and he is helpless. I remember, in the opening of my ministry, being brought in contact with a man who had been long a sinner, and a sinner of no ordinary type, but who was at length, I trust, made the subject of renewing grace. In the first arrest, whilst under conviction of guilt, he said to me, his whole frame convulsed with emotion: "Sir, I think I might be a Christian if I could only leave this town; but here everything links me to sin. I go out of my door"—I am giving you in substance his very thought, though not his language—"I go out of my door in the morning, and, whilst my hand is yet upon the latch, there passes one before me with whom I have often spent the night in bacchanalian revels, and I am strangely tempted to renew those convivial pleasures. Hardly have I broken from this temptation, but, as I walk

down the street to my office, I encounter another man with whom I have often competed in dreadful rivalry as to who should most profane the name of God, and Satan suggests to me to renew the dreadful achievement: and so, during the hours of the long day, every object upon which my eye rests, and every man with whom I come in contact, seems to be a separate cord binding me to the sins from which I am striving to break away." Oh! is it not this difficulty which first the sinner encounters when he seeks to be a Christian: how to break away from old companions, whose ridicule and scorn he dreads—how to break up these associations which have woven themselves around him like a net? Have you never witnessed a fly caught in a spider's web—a web of gossamer, so thin, so frail, that you scarcely see it through the light in which it is viewed? Shall not the poor prisoner caught in the toils find it easy to rend a web so frail? Alas! because that web is so elastic and yields to every movement of the struggling victim, cleaving to him as he draws in to himself—it is upon that very ground the more difficult of extrication. If he had only a point of support; if the web would only abide firm as he draws the entangled limb, there might be hope of deliverance. But it is of the nature of these elastic associations, that when we draw away from them we draw them with us; and so they cling around us like the very garment in which we are dressed, and man finds it difficult to escape. Here, then, are two laws of our nature, each singly competent to work out the result of the text. When combined, how can man hope to escape? The law of exercise always developing that which is evil in our nature, and the law of association which is at every moment renewing the opportunity of indulgence!

Consider, next, *the law of habit.* I will not pause upon the philosophy of habit, but content myself with its most palpable phenomena. You know that the repetition again and again of a single act, generates a habit. It is thus that our life cuts a channel for itself; just as the waters that come trickling down the side of the mountain, by their continued friction, wear away the earth and dig out the channel of the broad stream which shall, at length, carry its floods and empty them into the distant ocean. You will get some idea of the immense power of habit, by remembering that many which are the most constraining are formed against the original bent and inclination of our nature. I am dealing with this subject rather by illustration than by argument. Here is the country youth who comes to our city into the counting-room of the merchant, as a clerk. Have you never watched the boy as, during the pauses of business, he gazes through the dusty panes into

the street beyond? How his young heart sighs for the large liberty of his father's fields! But when the painful apprenticeship is passed, and he is developed into the princely and successful merchant, the atmosphere of that apartment is brighter to him than any Italian sky; and to pore over those dusty ledgers, with their mysterious hieroglyphics, is sweeter joy than to gaze upon any of nature's most beautiful landscapes. Such is the power of habit to transform man's nature; and so strong are those cords which bind us, which, in the first instance, were against all the original impulses and inclinations of the heart. But take an illustration which will come directly home to each one of us. Here is the boy at school. We have all, in our time, been at school, and have passed through the process. How hard it is to break in that truant mind and hold it to the book! How, like the wild ass's colt, is it continually breaking its tether, and giving a long and tedious chase before it can be caught and bridled again! But when, after the long discipline of the master's ferule, that boy matures into the ripe and accomplished scholar—why, my hearers, next to communion with God, there is no joy upon this earth superior to that which he experiences in fellowship with the great dead, who still live in their immortal works. Ah! if there be power in habit to transform one's nature when those habits are all against the inclinations of that nature, what shall be the strength of those habits which exactly jump with the inclinations of the heart, and move without resistance on the very plane and in the very direction in which they sweep? So that a man, through this power of habit, finds himself at length the bond slave of his sin. It is a truth solemn as eternity itself, that all the while, whether we reck of it or no, every word and every thought and every desire are concreting into solid and fixed habits, from which at last there may be no extrication. Perhaps in your travels you have seen the water oozing through the crevice of some dark cave, falling drop by drop, and congealing as it falls upon the floor beneath, until, at length, those huge pillars of stalactite are formed, which, to the eye of the casual observer, seem to uphold the solid earth itself. Just so these single thoughts of ours that spring from the inner fountains, and leak down, drop by drop, congealing over us, and forming at length that second nature, which it may be more difficult to subdue even than the first. So that a man, at fifty years of age, who undertakes to change his course of life, finds that he has not only to struggle with that original nature, which was all sin through and through, but with the stern difficulties which first confront him, springing out of the soil of this second nature which has been formed by habit

I have not stated the worst feature yet. It is that when habit has bound us in its embrace, it tightens its clasp at the last, until we are perfectly crushed within its folds. There is no man upon earth who surrenders himself to an evil habit that, if God's grace does not give him power to extricate himself, is not, at the last, crushed within its folds, as Laocoon of old within the folds of the serpent which had wound itself around his limbs. Perhaps you have heard of the cruel invention of the tyrant, who contrived a narrow cell of iron in which to imprison his victim; and as the poor wretch, through weary months, looked upon those plates of iron and had grown weary with counting the rivets by which they were fastened together, he perceived at last a mysterious movement of the walls themselves. Great God! can it be that the room is narrowing? And as he gazes in the agony of his fear, the mysterious contraction still goes forward, and those walls draw nearer and nearer together. There is not a sound to indicate the movement. In his desperation he springs to his feet, and becomes as erect as the chain will allow which binds him to the staple upon the floor, gazing upon those walls as they approach nearer and nearer, until at last he is crushed and mangled beneath the tremendous pressure. This is only a faint figure, my hearers, of the tremendous power of human habit when it begins with its terrible contraction, and makes the sinner feel that he is powerless.

Here, then, are three laws—the law of *exercise*, the law of *association*, and the law of *habit*—just like the laws of the physical world, always operative and always silent in their movement. Do you hear the sun when he comes forth in the dawn and throws open its gates, and drives his chariot bickering upon its highway until he reaches the zenith? Do you hear the creaking, as these orbs spin upon their soft axles perpetually? Do you hear any movement when the sun drinks up, in his thirst, from the bosom of the sea, the waters which he will gather in his cisterns in the sky and pour them down again in the early and in the latter rain? Do you hear any of the friction of the wheels of this vast machinery of the universe? And yet all these laws of nature—the law of attraction, the law of cohesion, the law of gravitation—are always in movement, always operative, always silent, driving forward to their ultimate results. It is just so with these laws of the understanding, these laws of the conscience, and these laws of the heart; moving, like the laws of the physical world, in their silence and in their grandeur and there is no power on earth or in hell that can for an instant arrest the operation. Under their combined influence, it becomes true of the

sinner, not only that he *will* sin, but that he *must* sin, and that he must do it with increasing intensity up to the last.

Now, are there any counteracting influences which shall arrest the operation, or, if they do not arrest, shall, at least, modify the action of those laws at which I have been hinting? I know of but two. The first is the power of truth, as that truth bears upon the conscience and upon the understanding of man. And now this brings me, in the fourth place, to speak of that moral law which governs the truth, viz: that it *always hardens where it does not subdue.* We sometimes speak of truth losing its power. We point our finger in sadness to some man whom we are led to abandon, and say of him, "Truth has lost its power upon that man." Why, my hearers, truth is the thought of God. There is no truth which the mind can comprehend, that is not the thought of the eternal and unchangeable Jehovah. Truth, therefore, in all the forms in which man can apprehend it, is immortal, like the God of which it is born, and is incapable of being shorn of its power. Truth can no more die than God. And this sometimes gives us, who have to fight for it, such grand trust in the power of a protest; so that when she falls to the earth, and we have no power to lift her blessed form and hold her up to the gaze of man, and we are called to the solemnities of her burial, we wrap her up in our protest as in a winding sheet, assured of her resurrection by and by. But remember that truth has more than one way of displaying her power. The snows, which a stern winter has accumulated upon the tops of a lofty mountain, melt into water at the approach of spring and summer, and flow down in those streams which fill our rivers and threaten us with overflow who dwell in the plains beneath. And when those mountain peaks are bare, then the sun comes down with the same power that melted the snow, and bakes the earth, until, at last, it splits open in great chasms; and these fissures which are wrought in the solid earth itself attest the power of the sun, although in a way entirely opposite to the snow, whith melts so gently under its heat. You roll in the palm of your hand a little wax, and place it down upon your hearth before the fire; and again you take a little soft clay and mould it in the palm of your hands, and place it by the side of the wax upon your hearth-stone: and, in a little while, the wax is all flowing in a stream at your feet, and your little piece of clay has become hard like marble and can be made a weapon of offence. But it is the same fire, and the same heat of the same fire, that hardened the clay and melted the wax. Shall you say there is no force in the heat upon the clay, because it does not subdue

and melt it as it does the wax? Why, this beautiful light which streams forth from the sun to-day, God meant it to illumine the world, that man, in its light, should be able to direct his way. But go out into that square and turn up your naked eye only for five minutes, and look steadfastly at the ball of the sun, and instantly those eyes of yours are shut up in the darkness of blindness until you die. It is the power of the sun's beams, originally intended to give light to man, that has filled those eye-balls of yours with perpetual darkness. But as the light loses not its power, so does not truth. Ah! my hearers you cannot bring the conscience of a man and put it under the power of divine truth but it shall become like a ball of iron in a vice—you turn the wrench and that ball flattens; you turn it again, it flattens more; you turn it the third time, it flattens still; but, at last, under the terrific pressure, that ball comes to its maximum of density and its resistance cannot be overcome. And so the human conscience can be put under the power of these divine motives, until at last it is driven in upon itself and reaches its maximum of density, and is incapable of being overcome. You see, then, the law which governs the truth in its application to the human conscience—that, in every instance, where it does not subdue and control, it unquestionably hardens, and becomes "the savor of death unto death."

The second counteracting power is that of the Holy Spirit. But then in the fifth place, you have the rule of His operations—that, *when the sinner obstinately resists Him, He at length takes His departure.* My hearers, the foundation of every sinner's hope is in the power of the Holy Ghost; and not only in His power, but in the freeness and sovereignty of His operations. But we are warned in the Word, "My spirit shall not always strive with man." "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." For when that Spirit takes His departure from the soul, then you have concurring all the laws, three of them natural and two of them moral, which, if they thus combine, work out the result in the text: "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin."

I desire to apply this subject in two reflections. Let no man who is at this moment conscious of being moved upon the subject of personal religion, delay faith in Christ and repentance towards God one single instant. I say nothing now as to the danger of delay. Let that pass. I will even consent to assume that you know, by revelation from God,

that you shall live upon this earth one thousand years, and that you can live nine hundred and ninety-nine of those years in sin, because God will spare you through them all; and you know that in the thousandth year, before it draws to its close, God's rich, sovereign, almighty grace will pluck you from the ruin which you deserve. But, even under this supposition, which is the largest and most favorable to you that I can make, I have to ask, what do you gain by the delay? At last all the difficulties in the way of the sinner's conversion have to be met, and those difficulties immensely aggravated by the very delay. Here are these habits all to be broken up, which are the more confirmed the longer they are indulged. Here are these associations from which you must be extricated, which have only drawn their meshes the tighter and the closer around you the longer you have remained in them. And here are these evil principles that have been growing in your nature, becoming taller and stronger every hour of every day through the law of exercise, at which I have already hinted. In the name of reason, I ask of those who listen to the sound of my voice this morning, what does the sinner gain by postponing the question of his salvation even for a day? Can it possibly be easier to-morrow than it is now? Will it be easier next week than it is this moment? How can it come to you any easier next year than now? Every year and every day that you postpone repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ, from the operation of these fixed laws of your own nature, it becomes more and more difficult for you to turn away from your sins unto God. By this argument, then, drawn from your own constitution, which seems to be as impressive and eloquent as any argument that can be urged, I plead with the sinner, if he feels the movements of the Spirit upon his heart this morning, to yield to His blessed influence, and lie in submission at the feet of Jesus, saying, "My Lord and my God."

Then, may it not be that I am addressing in this assembly, small as it is to-day, some who are described in the language of the text? My hearers, the thought is sometimes overwhelming, as the preacher stands before his audience and proclaims the messages of eternal life, that he may be actually preaching the "savor of death unto death," and who shall be educated, under his very ministrations, for the doom they are hereafter to encounter. How can the thought but force itself upon the mind —shall all these people stand at last upon the right hand of the Judge, and hear the welcome, "Come, ye blessed of my Father?" Or may there not be sitting here and there, and there and here, in different parts of the building, one and another and another who must hear the dread-

ful sound, "Depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" Oh! how every Sabbath Day you listen to the most solemn appeals of the Gospel without emotion! I seek to catch inspiration from the song of the angels, and paint to you, in the very dialect of the Spirit, the glories of the upper kingdom, but I am to you "only as one that hath a pleasant voice, and that playeth well upon an instrument." I go down into the world of despair and uncover the mouth of the pit, and hold intercourse even with the lost, and pour their dismal groanings into your ears, and yet ye are not alarmed! I seize the trumpet of the archangel, with which he will summon a sleeping world to judgment, and yet its piercing blasts do not penetrate your sealed ears! I stand at the foot of the cross and catch the wail of Jesus in His expiring moment, as He pours out His intercession, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and, turning His eye upon a lost world, says "Come unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," and yet ye are not won! Oh, sinner! where shall I find the argument to prevail with you if all these fail? I have made the circuit of three worlds, and sought an argument in each. I have laid bare to you the vanities of earth; I have spread before you the attractions of heaven; I have poured forth before you the warnings of hell: yet, to day, in frozen indifference, you are standing beneath this three-fold battery just as though I were throwing handfuls of roses against the rock of Gibraltar! What evidence is here of the hardness of the sinner's heart! Adamant is nothing to it. Harder than the very rocks upon which you stand is the hardness of the heart that is able to stand against God's own appeals, as He utters them in all the worlds of which we have any knowledge. Is it too much to fear in this state of the case, that those who continue Sabbath after Sabbath unmoved by these appeals, may be holden with the cords of their sins, and that their iniquities have taken hold upon them? But, my friends, if you cannot *feel*, you can at least *think;* and I ask you to revolve the solemn question in your mind, "Wherein do I, thus hard and impenitent and unbelieving under the Gospel, differ from those whom God has already shut up in the world of despair?" There is a difference, blessed be the grace of God! This difference is, that you are upon the earth; that you are the prisoners of hope; that God still addresses to you the calls of His mercy and the pleadings of His love. Oh! whilst prisoners of hope, flee to the place of refuge, and be shut within the ark, and you will be safely sheltered from the flood when it comes upon the world to destroy it.

VIII.

THE WOUNDED SPIRIT.

PROVERBS xviii, 14:—"*The spirit of man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?*"

In the interpretation of Proverbs we must surmount the want of a context. There is no continuity of thought to which we can recur, to obtain a clue by which we shall be guided when lost amid the obscurities of a passage. The proverb, from its very nature, is almost independent of proof; inasmuch as it either states a truth in itself self-evident, or because it sets forth the ascertained experience of mankind. It pre-supposes an immediate acceptance without challenge; and is intended to give portable maxims in the discharge of duty, or else accurate tests by which to resolve cases of perplexity and doubt. In the proverb before us, man's spirit or soul, in its sound and healthy condition, is able, by its inherent resolution, to sustain the ordinary calamities of life; but when that spirit is itself smitten, the anguish is intolerable, and the case is hopeless. This distinction appears the more emphatic when we go down into the etymology of the original terms employed in the text: where the word translated "infirmity," primarily means to rub, so as to smooth and to polish; and, by a natural transition, it passes into its secondary meaning of exhausting or wearing out; and thus comes to stand for all those outward afflictions which, by their constant attrition, wear out the strength. In like manner, the word "sustain" primarily means to hold as in a measure—that is to say, the mind, in its normal condition, contains within itself all the troubles which can be poured into it; and so, by compassing, is able to endure them. But the wounded spirit—that is to say, the spirit that is itself diseased and depressed—who can bear? that is, who can lift it up? There is nothing to gird or prop it from beneath, as the sound mind underlies and supports ordinary troubles.

We are met in daily life with constant illustrations of this distinction. A man, in the transactions of business, meets with a sudden reversal of

fortune. Now if it be due simply to the interlacing of business—if he can refer it to contingencies that were entirely beyond his control—however bitter the disappointment may be, he is able to bear it with comparative equanimity. But if he trace it to his own recklessness, or indolence, or caprice, there comes in the element of self-reproach, by which the spirit itself is wounded, and the distress is acute. So, too, sickness, when it is the immediate visitation of God, is one thing; but when we trace it to a wilful disregard of the laws of health, the suffering which we experience from the consciousness of blame is far greater than the pain which springs from the disease itself. Take another illustration. The martyr is able to confront the most cruel death with absolute triumph; and his spirit rises to heaven with rejoicing and song, just as the lark rises out of the early morning dew; while the condemned culprit is deserted of his manhood, and goes to his fate trembling and pale. So much, then, for the distinction in the text. I desire to employ it as an argument with the impenitent for closing immediately their dreadful controversy with God, by showing that the doom which impends over them is just this anguish of a wounded spirit.

As a preliminary thought, let me suggest to you that the moral government of God is more immediately over the spirit; and upon this the penalty of transgression must chiefly fall. He is the Father of our spirits; He knows their nature; He comprehends all their faculties; He understands the laws by which they are controlled. It is true that these spirits are embodied. It is true that these spirits will be hereafter embodied at the resurrection. But in the judgment which God pronounces against the sinner at the last day, inasmuch as the soul is the seat of disorder and of sin, it is principally upon that the weight of punishment must fall. Even in this life, which is far from being a life of retribution, but, on the contrary, one of forbearance and of trial, we have striking illustrations of the anguish which God, in His ordinary discipline, can inflict upon the spirit that is wounded. There are bereavements so overwhelming as to crush down the elasticity of hope; when the shadow of a life-long sorrow is thrown upon the path, and when the very smile is sadder than any sign of mourning can be. Have you never seen and pitied such? Or, go into a madhouse, and behold the unhappy beings in whom reason is dethroned; and there see how, through one disordered faculty—nay, through the predominance of only one reigning idea—He can inflict intolerable torture upon the spirit. Now, if in this world, which is to us a world of probation and of hope, in the exercise of His ordinary

discipline, God is thus able, through a single thought, to inflict such anguish, it is not difficult to infer what must be the weight of that sorrow which falls upon the condemned soul in the world of retribution, when God lets loose all His justice, not upon one, but upon all the faculties at once, in order to wound and to punish.

I. Under this general preliminary thought, I allege, in the first instance, THAT TORTURE WHICH ARISES FROM SOME OF THE FACULTIES OF THE SOUL IN THEIR NECESSARY EXERCISE. I have no doubt that it holds true of all our faculties alike, if we should make a careful analysis of each; but I select only two, as being, perhaps, more obtrusive than the rest, to-wit: the *memory* and the *conscience*. The masters in science tell us that no force in nature ever perishes. A pebble thrown upon the surface of the lake occasions circles, which widen and widen from their centre, until they strike the opposite shore; and then, by rebound, they travel back; and so backward and forward, and forward and backward, forever. The gentle movement of the hand causes vibrations in the air, which roll on through the vastness of space and never cease. The softest whispers of love wake up echoes which repeat themselves forever and never die. Now, whether this telegraphic system of the universe, as it is called, be literally true, I am not required to pronounce. One would think that, however true the theory may be in its idea, there must be natural limitations upon it which shall prevent it from being realized in fact. Still, one can scarcely help wishing it to be true, for the poetical grandeur of the conception. But, my hearers, whether it be true of matter or not, it is unquestionably true of mind. As De Quincey has said, "There is no such thing as forgetting." To appropriate the figure of another, memory makes its secret inscriptions upon its tablets as sometimes we write with lemon juice upon paper. The cypher may be invisible, until you bring that paper before the light and heat of the fire, when every character is rendered plain to the eye. And so these secret inscriptions which are made upon the tablets of memory may be apparently forgotten through long years, and ten thousand objects which engage our attention may withdraw them from our sight. They may lie in concealment—to employ the beautiful figure of another—just as the light of the sun draws a veil over the face of the stars and hides them from our view. But when those tablets come to be held at last before the judgment and before the fires of eternity, they will be read in their awful legibleness forever. We have prophetic intimations of this in the experience of drowning men; who, when they

have been rescued, tell us that, in a second of time, the whole panorama of the past has been spread before them, and the most distant and forgotten scenes have loomed up before the eye. Who is there of us that, by some casual association, has not experienced this marvellous reviviscence of past thoughts and of past scenes, bringing the whole of the life which we have spent afresh before us? Ah! my hearers, there is to be at the last a fearful resurrection of our buried sins! Every neglected duty, every abused mercy, every despised privilege, every wasted opportunity—every sin of word, of thought, of deed, of desire, of passion—sins of omission and sins of commission—they will all rise with us out of the grave to which we have carried them; and they will clothe us around as a garment, and, like the shirt of Nessus, they will consume all the closer they may cling. Here, then, in one single department of the soul, in this one faculty of the memory, there is laid up for the condemned hereafter a store of torture which it would take a lifetime to unfold.

Then look at the *conscience*, that supreme power in the human soul, which, because it is the exponent of law, is made the vicegerent of God, seated upon this lower tribunal to adjudicate the causes which will go up for final confirmation to the tribunal above; that conscience which, however it may be debauched, can never lose its jurisdiction; that conscience which, as Bishop Reynolds has said, "Though it may be asleep as to motion, is never asleep as to observation;" that conscience which, because it is placed in dominion over the other faculties, must become, in the world of retribution, the supreme source of spiritual torture. Why, my hearers, just regard three facts in regard to conscience. The first is, that numberless offences, however small, engender at length a constant irritation, something analogous to the bodily distress which arises from chronic indigestion, or from the entire derangement of the nervous system. I think you will understand my meaning from the illustration which I have employed. A thousand irregularities in your diet occasion a thousand momentary uneasy sensations, which accumulate, in their final influence, into that permanent dyspepsia, that chronic indigestion, which is to many a source of unceasing bodily distress. Or these daily and hourly draughts upon the nervous energies, which we are able year after year to sustain, until, by their combined influence, the whole nervous system is unstrung; and then those who are acquainted with the anatomy of the human frame may possibly, from their science, find terms to describe the physical torture which is endured. So these ten thousand sins which a man commits, and of which he is continually saying in his

thought, "Is it not a little one?"—these small sins aggregate, and, in their combined influence, work upon the conscience a state of chronic irritation, which, even in this life, produces that restlessness and incertitude which we are continually perceiving in the men of the world, and which can only be taken away by the blood "that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel."

Then the second fact in regard to conscience: the power in exposure to rouse it from its stupor and fill it with new terrors. Many in life sin; and while it is secret, the current of their joy does not appear even for a moment interrupted: but when it is blazen forth in the light of day, the conscience, which before had slept, rouses with all its terrors and brings its accusations, which are sources of inexpressible anguish.

Then the third fact in regard to conscience, which I take from one of the most powerful of our living writers: that, as the exponent of God's law, it perpetually confronts the transgressor with his personal obligations; and though for a time conscience may cease to reprimand, yet it is evermore taking note of those transgressions, to bring them at last in their aggregate before the eye. God plants this power in the soul, evermore to expound His own perfect and holy law; which must therefore eternally confront the sinner with a recognition of his own personal obligations. These may not have power to arrest the man in his sins; yet, by his very rebound from the obstacle, he will gather momentum in his power to sin, and, of course, in his power hereafter to suffer—just as the rock, loosened from the top of the mountain, rolls down the steep declivity and gathers force from every obstacle with which it meets, and, with increased momentum, thunders at last in its fall into the plain beneath.

Now gather up these three facts in regard to the conscience, and see what must be its power to torture when the sinner is banished from God's presence and from the glory of His power.

Here, then, are two faculties of the soul—*memory* upon the one hand, and *conscience* upon the other—and, in their combined power, what must be the depth of woe which those experience who can find no relief from either?

II. In the second place, look at that FORM OF DISTRESS HEREAFTER, ARISING FROM FACULTIES OF THE SOUL WHICH CAN FIND NO CONGENIAL OBJECTS UPON WHICH TO TERMINATE. Here, as in the other case, the proposition holds true of all the powers with which we are endowed. But, for the sake of brevity, let me again illustrate my

meaning by the selection only of two. Look at the *understanding* and the *imagination*. The understanding God has constituted to be nourished by and to find exquisite delight in truth; for truth, in all the forms in which it exists, is to the mind exactly what food is to the body. If, in the latter, God has placed the power of assimilating food, so that it shall pass into blood and into flesh and into muscle and into sinew and into bone, and so continually repair the waste and flux which is occurring; just so the mind takes all truth wherever it can be found in all God's kingdoms, and, by a similar power of digestion, assimilates that truth to itself, feeds upon it, grows by means of it, is nourished and strengthened by it. And as there is pleasure in the reception of food by the body, so is there enjoyment in the reception of truth by the mind. But, in the world of despair—when all truth respecting God shall be disclosed and yet there shall be no ability on the part of the sinner to sympathize with and to assimilate it—this very truth will become a source of torture; just as when you turn the diseased eye up to the sun, that glorious light, which God designed to be evermore the joy of the eye, becomes the instrument of exquisite torture. Man will have in hell an intellect broader and stronger and clearer than here; and it will search through all that vast domain for one solitary truth, upon which it can rest with satisfaction or delight. There is, too, one law of the understanding, to which I may be allowed just for an instant to advert. I refer to that instinct by which it is continually turning from the speculative to the practical; never satisfied with the bare reception of truth as the aliment upon which it shall feed, but instantly seeking to convert that truth to practical uses. It is the glory of the science of our age that it walks upon the two equal legs of discovery and of application. In all the departments of physical science, men are not content with simply discovering the laws and the forces of nature; but instantly turn, and subordinate those forces to the practical uses of life. In metaphysical research, we do not rest in simply tracing the laws of mind, and explaining the processes of thought; but we instantly seek to formulate these into practical rules for the guidance of daily conduct. Even in mathematics, the most abstract of all the sciences, is it enough to throw rude diagrams upon the blackboard, and make demonstrations by angles, by sides and by circles? Or do we use all these as but the ladder by which we ascend to the very copestone of the heavens, and bound the very orbits in which the planets sweep? How is this mathematical knowledge brought down to daily life and employed in our works of engineering skill? Ah brethren, it will be among the enjoyments of

the heavenly world that there we shall take the truth of God, and as if by the power of a holy instinct, we shall turn it not only into knowledge, but into worship and into praise forever. And the reverse holds true of hell. There the wicked, because they have understanding, will be compelled to see the truth as it respects God and His holiness, but with no power to receive it and to assimilate it; and certainly with no power to transmute that bare knowledge into any acts of reverence, of worship, or of love. And so the understanding, negatively and positively, becomes a source of torture to the lost, having no congenial object upon which, as a faculty, it can terminate and find satisfaction.

What shall I say about the imagination, that beautiful power which God has given to us, and which is intended by Him for our intensest gratification? that imagination with which, as with a pencil, hope paints the future before us, and throws upon its canvas a thousand images of beauty and of love? But if hereafter that imagination be condemned to the office only of conjuring up images of horror, must it not become an element of exceeding distress? Unable to find satisfaction in any thing that is beautiful and glorious in God; nay, rather, by the very force which it has within itself, it will convert these into phantoms, which shall fill the eye as spectres that come to haunt and to mock forever. Then the malignant passions, such as envy and malice and rage, which find in this life a momentary gratification in a momentary indulgence, as they are severally wreaked upon the unhappy heads of those who are obnoxious to us—oh! how, at the last, they will recoil upon the sinner himself from sheer impotency to reach God and holy beings, lifted immeasurably beyond their touch! It is the saddest of all sad things to say, that the very powers of the soul turn in upon themselves, and, by their own corrosive force, become the sources of indescribable anguish!

III. In the third place, THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLE WILL BE A SEPARATE ELEMENT OF SUFFERING TO THE LOST. We shall carry our social nature into eternity. God made us from the beginning a race; not thrown into being singly, but springing from the loins of one Father and Head. This principle of race, of community, of brotherhood, of fellowship, which I denominate the social principle, every man carries with him into the eternal world. It constitutes no small part of the blessedness of heaven; for it will be a great enhancement of the joy there, that the happiness of all will be the possession of each—that each redeemed soul will not only be blessed in the enjoyment of all the

bliss which is peculiarly his own, but that he will spread himself out in that community of joy which floods all Heaven with light and glory. But in hell, by the force of the nature which the condemned sinner carries with him, he must still feel the working of this social element, and find there no possible gratification. The last effect of sin in drying up the natural affections will there be seen. There will be association there, but no society. There will be contact there, but no communion. The bond of love has been forever destroyed, and there can be no fellowship. Think of it! The soul going out evermore from itself and seeking its fellow, only to experience an instantaneous recoil, which drives it back into the solitude of its single being. The craving for society is only to be felt as an appetite which shall never be gratified—a hunger which shall never be appeased.

IV. Consider, in the fourth place, THE PAIN WHICH ARISES FROM AN OVERWHELMING DESPAIR FOREVER REPRESSING ALL THE NECESSARY ACTIVITIES OF THE SOUL. I wish I had power to expand this thought, for it is amongst the most fearful of all the conceptions I have of hell. It is of the nature of spirit to be active. There are a thousand facts in our own history and in the recorded history of others, showing that the spiritual principle hid within these fleshly bodies never knows rest. The senses may be locked up, one by one, in sleep; and the body, with its limbs, may lie upon the bed, as still and unconscious as a log: but the soul within the bosom, which thinks and feels, does it ever sleep? The reporter may not touch the keys and telegraph to us the operations of this mysterious and immortal principle; but there it is, bounding forward in its ceaseless activity. In the world of spirits to which we go, carrying with us this thinking and active principle, it becomes, on the one hand, an element of blessedness to the righteous, and, on the other, of unceasing torture to the wicked. I suppose it will be a source of joy in Heaven just to feel the springing of this active spirit within us; just as there is a physical joy in the consciousness of indwelling life, and in the bounding and springing within us of the principle of life. The young luxuriate simply in living. They bound upon the plain and rejoice in their sports, from the mere exuberance of the animal life that is within them, having a pleasure in the bare sensation of life. And so there will be an eternal pleasure in the possession of the spiritual or divine life, in the presence of God and of the angels. There will be always a holy joy in the consciousness of thought—thought springing upon thought, and bounding forward in its

career, enlarging its horizon, bringing the more distant and unknown objects within its view. Apart from the glories of the things which that thought will recognize, there will be a delight in the enjoyment of the thought itself—in the bare activity of these immortal spirits, which shall never be clogged with weights, as the spirit is weighted and clogged by this mortal flesh upon the earth.

Reverse the picture. The souls that are banished from God's presence will be souls still—spirits that, by the nature of spirit, are essentially active and can never rest. And now, think of them as they spring up from the deeps into which they are plunged, by the necessary outworking within them of the eternal and impelling necessity of spirit; only to feel the overwhelming despair which God rolls down upon them, crushing instantly all these necessary activities of the soul! Oh! to be eternally striving, and eternally crushed! To be always leaping up from the deeps, only to be hurled down into deeps that are deeper still! To feel forever the unceasing activity of the spirit, only to know how that activity can be overwhelmed! I dare not expand the thought. If I have been able to suggest it only, I am satisfied. Oh! the torture of the soul that must forever feel the weight of this despair, simply as it represses these activities of the spirit and gives them no scope for action!

V. In the fifth and last place, there is THE PAIN ARISING FROM THE SENSE OF CREATURELY DEPENDENCE THAT CAN NEVER REST UPON GOD FOR ITS SUPPORT. We *are* creatures. It is the prerogative of God alone to exist by necessity. But as for all beneath God, in all the worlds where we can trace them, all beings live and move in a state of dependence. There is in every created being the instinct of creatureship—that clinging sense of helplessness and dependence which belongs to the creature. When I hear men around me, in the madness of human folly, talking of achieving their independence, I ask where is the man, moving in society at all, who is able to render himself independent even of his fellows? How much less of the great God, who continually covers him with the palm of His hand and upholds him with His protection? I am amazed at the folly in man which would seek to make him independent of that superintending Providence which overspreads us all; of that blessed agency which is interwoven with every thought of our minds, and every purpose of our will, in all that web of action which we are continually weaving in life. My brethren, it is the attitude of rebellion against the authority of God when, even in his thought, man

speaks of achieving independence of the Most High. Let men prate about it as they will, there are seasons of reflection and candor with them all, in which they feel that it is in God alone that they live and move; and they cannot throw aside the consciousness of that dependence, which is the very instinct of the creature. I presume it will be one of the delights of Heaven that we shall find that creatureship eternally supported; lifted to a plane higher than we can now conceive, with capacities enlarged beyond the reach of our imagination. And when we shall be able to soar and to move in our inquiries after God and in our happy fulfilling of His will, in every movement of these blessed activities there will be this consciousness of rest, in our creatureship, upon the power of the Creator—a constant sense of the divine power undergirding every movement of every faculty. Thus it is that there will always be activity in Heaven, and always rest. Because there is no night there, there shall be no sleep there; and if there be no night and no sleep, there shall be no rest there; and yet there shall always be rest—rest in our activity, rest in the very exercise of our energy. Why, even the old mythologists had a dim conception of it in the ancient legend of the wrestler, who, as often as he was thrown to the earth, gathered strength from the touch of the mother from whose bosom he sprung to renew the conflict. This is but a faint figure of the eternal rest which the redeemed in glory shall find through their contact with God, in the ceaseless exercise of their immortal powers. But oh! in the other world, where God is not in the comfort and revelation of His presence—where the doomed are obliged to feel, as they never felt before, that they are creatures, with all the sense of creatureship and all the instinct of helplessness and dependence clinging to them; and yet evermore consciously recoiling from God as their only support—sinking, sinking forever, in the helplessness which can find nothing to rest itself upon.

But let me draw the curtain over scenes like these. I have entered upon this exposition with no view to harrow the feelings, nor to excite the sentiment of fear, but merely to exhibit the one truth into which you may gather all the propositions I have announced: that the elements of future woe are all of them imbedded in the very constitution which God has given you; and that, because you are what you are, you carry with you into the eternal world both the corporeal and the spiritual elements of all the suffering which the doomed man can possibly experience. But now let me turn the medal over and read the inscription upon the

other side. Let me show you HOW THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST MAKES A PERFECT PROVISION FOR A WOUNDED SPIRIT; and that I may be brief, I will confine myself to three particulars.

1. The first is, that *the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ not only makes reparation for all the wrong that we have ever done, but puts that reparation into our own hands, that we may plead it before God.* The thought is a double one, but I will make both exceedingly plain to you. Suppose that you or I had wronged a fellow man, by defrauding him either of his character or of his property, and should afterwards feel remorse for the havoc which we had made. Then suppose a third party should interpose and repair that wrong, or, to make the case still stronger, should make our wrong even redound to the advantage of the injured party. I ask whether, if we were sincerely sorry for the injury we had inflicted, the estoppal of all the consequences of our act would not afford some relief to the wounded spirit? True, there would remain the sense of guilt as to our own act; but it would be a source of indescribable pleasure to know that, guilty as the act was, it has been arrested in its consequences, and that the injured party has even profited by our misconduct. Well, let us suppose further, that this third party shall not simply repair the wrong, but that he shall also put it into our hands to make the reparation: Would not the comfort be all the stronger? Would we not experience some healing of this wounded spirit? My hearers, sin is a dreadful wrong against God, a grievous wrong against His law, a fearful wrong done to His universe. And now just let me say, in a sentence, but with exceeding plainness, to those proud moralists who are all the time talking about how good they are; that they do not need Jesus Christ, nor any atonement, nor any sacrifice, nor any pardon; who are always boasting of their honesty; that they never wronged any man; that they never defrauded a neighbor of a single right; and are wrapping their honesty around them as a cloak, rejoicing in it before God: I solemnly, in the name of Almighty God, challenge your audacity in these utterances. How dare you say that you have wronged no being in the universe, when, from the very moment of your birth, you have wronged God? You have robbed Him of the homage which is His due; of the obedience which He claims at your hands; of the love which He is continually exacting from your heart. You have not brought the tithes into His storehouse. Habitually, wilfully, every hour of every day, you are taking from God that which belongs to Him; and then you stand in the face of high Heaven, beneath the dome of these beautiful skies, declaring that you have wronged no being

in the universe. Be it so that you have never defrauded nor wronged your neighbor; yet I charge upon you that you are a defaulter in the very highest and most emphatic sense of the word. You have wronged, by sin, a law which is perfect, and which is the expression of God's perfections and of God's glories, and you have wronged the universe. Oh! if your sin should be allowed to work out its last result in its influence upon the world around you, you would stand aghast at the havoc you have made. And now Jesus Christ comes in the sinner's stead, and, by His perfect obedience, repairs all this dismal wrong-doing of ours. He magnifies the law which we have broken, and makes it honorable; and then He comes and puts that righteousness into your hands and into mine, that you and I may accept it by faith, and then carry it ourselves before the mercy seat and before the judgment throne, and repair, through it, all the wrong we have ever done to the law of God. Depend upon it, that when the Holy Spirit puts forth His renewing power upon the human soul, you will see that the Gospel of Jesus Christ makes its appeal to all that is noble and magnanimous in the soul. If there were no other reason for accepting the glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ, this would be enough for me. Even if my soul were not saved through it, yet if, with this righteousness, I could go up at last before the judgment throne, and there, in the presence of the whole universe, vindicate God and vindicate His law and vindicate His majesty, and thus repair the wrong which I have done to God and the whole universe by a life of transgression and sin, I should feel that it were a boon beyond all others in its richness. And it is that which makes the Christian sometimes long for the judgment day with all its terrors. The soul that carries within it the consciousness that it has sinned—that has been once made to feel the shame and the meanness of that sin, and all the harm which it has attempted upon God and upon the universe—feels that it would face a world in flames in order to proclaim that, through the righteousness of its Head, all its wrong doing against God has been gloriously repaired.

2. In the next place, *the Holy Spirit heals this wounded soul of ours in His work of sanctification;* for just as life comes out of death, so healing out of wounding. If the Holy Spirit comes with His convictions, through the law, it is only that He may discharge His office as a comforter. He will convince the world of sin and of judgment; but oh! my brethren, praise Him, praise Him for His grace, for right between the sin and the judgment the Holy Spirit places the righteousness which keeps them forever apart! "He will reprove the world of

sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." [John 16:8.] Ah! if God is satisfied and the law is honored, shall not the conscience of the transgressor, which is but the echo of these, be appeased, and is not that source of torture gone? If the Holy Spirit enlighten the mind, and bring it into sympathy with the truth, is not that source of torture gone? If the Holy Spirit purify the affections and cause them to flow in their proper channel towards God, is not that source of torture gone? If the Holy Spirit come and take the sting out of our memory, so that we recall our past transgressions and feel that they are cancelled, is not that source of torture gone? If the Holy Spirit bring us into communion with God and with the Lord Jesus Christ, and they have fellowship with us, is not that source of torture gone? And so, when you take up all the wounds which sin has made upon the human soul, you find that the Holy Spirit, in the work of sanctification, perfects the healing, and brings to us a peace which is unspeakable and full of glory.

3. In the last place, *the human spirit, when thus healed, is lifted, in the prospect of Heaven, above the possibility of being wounded any more.* Read the inscription over the gate, "There is no more curse;" and, therefore, it holds true, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor pain, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." There is no more curse. The curse the Savior carried with Him into His own grave, and there it lay buried forever when He rose triumphant; and, through all the life beyond the grave, we shall have the spirit not only healed, but it shall never be wounded again. The tempter shall never enter there with any of his suggestions. "There shall in no wise enter anything that defileth;" and if all that defileth be forever excluded from those gates of peace, then the soul which escapes pollution can only know enjoyment and blessedness forever.

In applying this subject, I wish to say just one or two things. If what I have been endeavoring to establish be accepted as true, then none of you can have any doubt as to the certainty of the punishment of the wicked finally. You ask a proof. Why, there it is in your very nature. By the absolute compulsion of that nature itself, there must be banishment at last of the wicked from the presence of God. Why, sinner, with that heart which you carry with you, it is impossible that you can ever find a heaven, even though you should seek to lie in the bosom of God himself. I suppose that, to the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, as described by the Apostle Paul, there is no hell so cruel as Heaven itself would be, even if the sinner were placed

upon the very throne of God. It is not the place that makes Heaven, but it is the state and condition of the soul with which we ascend there. And unless God be our Father and Christ our Redeemer, and, with a holy heart, we can look upon the face of the Holy God, we would plead for banishment from that presence and from the glory of that power, as being to us the most excessive torture. I can give but a faint conception of the misery of the lost hereafter, when I say that the very elements of their misery are found reposited in their very constitution and frame. I do not care to dwell upon the material images by which the Scriptures represent the torment of the lost. I will say nothing about the fire, nor the lake, nor the worm that never dies. There is at least this underlying truth: that as the body is a part of us and belongs to our complex being, it becomes the partaker of our sins; and there must be, in some form or other, the infliction of the penalty upon the body as well as upon the spirit. There is a resurrection of the wicked, as well as of the righteous; and in the spiritual bodies of the one there will be suffering, as there will be enjoyment in the spiritual bodies of the other. But if the wicked carry their memory and their conscience and their understanding and their imagination into eternity, they carry with them the elements of the woe which they shall experience throughout eternity. I beg of you, if you have not repented of sin and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, let this argument, drawn from the very frame of your being, the strongest I can urge, prevail with you to accept Christ, and have the peace which that faith will inspire. Then you will exclaim, in those tender verses of the pious Cowper,

> "I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
> Long since: with many an arrow deep infix'd
> My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
> To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
> There was I found by One who had himself
> Been hurt by the archers: in his side he bore
> And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.
> With gentle force soliciting the darts,
> He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me live."

Oh! that the darts which are infixed in you and in me may be drawn forth by Him who has borne them all in His own body; and that, being healed, we may suffer, neither here nor in the world to come, from that wounded spirit which none can bear!

IX.

CHRIST, THE FINAL JUDGE.

ACTS xvii, 30:31:—"*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*"

All who admit the moral government of God over men must perceive the necessity for a final judgment. Independent of the explicit testimony of Scripture, there are two lines of proof by which this may be established. The first is drawn from the unequal dealings of God with the righteous and with the wicked, respectively, in the present life. The righteous, though declared to be in favor of God and the heirs of the largest blessings, are for the most part exercised with reproach, with sorrow and with pain. They go with their heads bowed down like the bulrush. Their melancholy cry is, "All the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." [Psalm lxxiii, 14.] And the Master gives them the faithful warning, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." On the other hand, the wicked, although lying under the judicial displeasure of God and the heirs of unending woe, are seen ordinarily prosperous. "Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish;" "For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm." [Ibid., 4:7.] Now in these unequal dispensations of Providence, God seems to be partial and unjust, unless we remember that this present economy is incomplete and we connect it with the decisions of the last day. It was precisely thus that Asaph, in the seventy-third Psalm, resolved this mysterious problem, and removed the scandal from the government of God. He was overwhelmed with this apparent partiality of the Great Ruler, until he went into the sanctuary of God and understood their end.

The second line of proof is the testimony of our own natural conscience—that power which God has planted within us to respond to His perfect and blessed law, and to interpret its challenges to us. "For

when the Gentiles," says the Apostle, "which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing, one another." [Romans ii, 14:15] Under the operation of conscience we are compelled to review our own actions, to pass judgment upon the same, and to experience, in the view of them, complacency if they are right, and a feeling of shame and alarm if they are wrong. But there is no significance in these deliverances of conscience unless they foreshadow a judgment to come. Conscience is as truly a witness as a judge. It sits upon its lower tribunal and adjudicates every cause that is brought before it, either for us or against us; and then it seals up its judgment, as its testimony, and sends it beforehand to the great tribunal above to meet us there. It is not at all impossible that a final judgment may be necessarily connected with a state of probation and trial; and may then belong to a system of natural religion itself. But in the text you have it presented as a doctrine of Christianity, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself set forth as the judge who shall pronounce the sentences at the last day. "He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained."

There are other passages of Scripture which affirm the same: "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works." [Matthew xvi, 27.] The same Evangelist declares, "The Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him; then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." [Matthew xxv, 31:32] Mark the double testimony: "He shall come in the glory of his Father"—that is to say, with the essential glory that belongs to the Godhead; and he shall come with His own glory—with that glory which is peculiar to Him as the mediator. Says the Apostle, writing to the Romans, "God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." [Romans ii, 16.] Again he says, in his epistle to the Thessalonians, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, in that day." [II Thessa-

lonians 1, 8:9:10.] The same Apostle charges his son Timothy "before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." [II Timothy iv, 1.] But, to sum up all these testimonies, it is the great declaration of Christ himself, when speaking to the disputing Jews, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." [John v, 22.] And, to leave no doubt whatever that this power belongs to Him as the Mediator, he adds, in a few verses afterwards, "He hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man." [Ibid. v, 27.] Mysterious truth! when that throne shall be placed upon the clouds, the Being who shall sit upon it and who shall open the books, will wear our nature and appear in our form; and those sentences, which shall never be reversed, will proceed from the same human lips which are now exclaiming from the cross, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

Let us this morning, my hearers, consider why, under this gospel economy, this judicial power should be assigned to the Son, Jesus Christ; for we would antecedently suppose that if there is to be a final judgment, it would be pronounced by God absolute, without reference to any distinction of persons in the Trinity; or, if the office of judge be exercised by one of those Persons rather than by another, we would naturally assign it to the Father, as the first in the order of thought, the fountain of all authority, and the administrator of law. But here, in these passages which I have recited to you, and particularly in the text, it is expressly declared that this judicial power will be exercised by none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." WHY, THEN, IN THIS ECONOMY OF GRACE, IS THIS POWER OF JUDGING AT THE LAST DAY ASSIGNED TO THE MEDIATOR?

I. *In the first place, because the day of judgment is intended to be a day of vindication; and the special necessity for a set day of vindication Is found in the scheme of grace of which Jesus Christ is the author.* God needs to be vindicated. Ah! how is His government maligned on earth! How is His law constantly disobeyed! How is His patience abused! How is His providence misjudged! How His mercy and His love are perverted and made the occasion of sin! Now, if God dealt with us upon principles of naked law, the vindication of His justice and of Himself would naturally run through the entire scheme of providence,

and there might not be the same necessity for a set day of vindication. If, for example, every transgression were instantly overtaken with condign punishment; if, at the very instant that the oath trembles upon the lips of the profane man, he should be smitten to the earth by the bolt of God's vengeance; there would not be, in that case, the necessity for a final judgment, when the transgressors should be brought before the bar, and dealt with severally according to their works. But God has been pleased to devise and to reveal a scheme of grace; and, to allow opportunity for its outworking, He bears with the wicked in their wickedness, and oftentimes for the sake of the righteous. The Apostle declares, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" [Romans ix, 22.] He then connects this forbearance, in the exercise of His judgment, with His scheme of grace, by immediately adding, "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he has afore prepared unto glory." [Ibid ix, 23.] Now, if the interposition of this scheme of grace, wrought out by the Lord Jesus Christ, holds the justice of God in abeyance, so that the vindication of law is not continually asserted upon the head of the transgressor, how perfect the vindication at the last, when the very Being who is the author of the grace is placed upon the throne, and made the executive under that law to administer the penalty.

Then, too, Christ himself needs vindication. It is very noticeable how exactly the several steps in our Lord's exaltation correspond with the steps in His humiliation. The thought is too broad for me to expand in this incidental mention of it. Yet how perfectly does the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave stand over against His humiliation and shame, when He went down into it and lay among the dead? His resurrection from the grave and ascension to Heaven, and His session at the right hand of His Father; how perfectly do they stand over against His humiliation and shame, when He is rejected of men and His gospel is despised? His descent, when He shall come with His own glory and with the glory of His father—how admirable an offset is it to the lowliness of His first advent, when he appears as the Babe of Bethlehem and is born in a manger? When He sits upon the judgment throne and brings all nations before His bar, what an antithesis does it present to His humiliation when He is arraigned and condemned as a criminal before the tribunal of men? For this reason it is that the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and this particular part of it, His sitting upon

the throne of final judgment, is represented in Scripture as the reward of His voluntary humiliation.

II. *In the second place, Christ will be the judge at the last day, because this forms an integral part of His work as mediator.* Therefore, in the text, it stands in such close connection with His resurrection: "Whereof," says the Apostle, "he gives assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." We take too narrow a view of the resurrection of Christ, when we construe it simply into a proof of His divinity and of His mission. It is true, as Paul says in the opening words of his epistle to the Romans, that He is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." But that resurrection is an integral part of the Savior's mediatorial work, which is not accomplished until He bursts the bars of death and rises triumphant over the grave. He went down into that grave under sentence of law, and there is no evidence of His acquittal unless He rises from the dead. He descended into that grave as the representative and head of His people, bearing their sins which were laid upon Him; and He must rise in person from that grave, to show that the sins He bore are left there, never to rise again to their condemnation and sorrow. If we share in the death of the Lord Jesus, in order that we may be acquitted from the curse, we must also share in the resurrection of Christ, in order that we may be partakers of the "newness of life." Therefore the Apostle everywhere declares that He not only *died*, but *rose again*, for our justification. We not only have fellowship with Him in His death, but also in the power of His resurrection. The resurrection is a part of the Savior's work which He assumes to do. It is just as necessary to the salvation of the sinner as the death from which that resurrection recovers Him. The two are but the different poles of the same great truth—the death which He voluntarily underwent in our stead, and the resurrection by which He secures our entire justification before the Father.

In like manner as the resurrection is an integral part of the work of Christ, so is this judgment which He dispenses at the last day. He must appear and sit upon that throne, as the representative and head of His people, to welcome them, and to bestow upon them the joy which He has promised. Why, through all the generations of time He has constrained His people to rest for their salvation upon His naked promise. Under all the burthen of our guilt, we simply believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and find peace. In our bereavements and sorrows, our supreme consolation is in looking to Him who bore our sorrows and

carried our grief. Even at death, just as we encounter the realities o the eternal world, we can only say, in the language of the Apostle, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." [II Timothy i, 12] From first to last we are constrained to rely simply upon the verbal pledge of Him who has promised that, in the great day of terror, He will be surety to our souls for good. In the fulfilment of this promise, upon which the faith of His people has reposed in all the generations that have passed over the earth, Christ sits at last upon that judgment throne ; and the word which He pronounces in the ears of such, is only the word which He has all along been sounding through the Gospel. The great word of the Gospel is, come, come, come ; "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ;" "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth ;" "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." From the cross to the judgment throne, along through all the ages, there is heard only the echo of this gracious call from the Redeemer's lips, "Come, come, come." When, as the representative of His people, He descends from His throne to sit upon the judgment seat, the first sound which bursts upon their ear is the old welcome, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

More than this, my brethren. Far back in the counsels of eternity, when the scheme of grace was devised, the Son stipulated, upon His part, that He would receive the seed whom the Father should give to Him ; that He would redeem them with His own precious blood ; that He would not only redeem, but would sanctify them by His spirit, and present them at last without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, holy and without blame, in love. Now He comes to fulfil that trust ; and having pronounced upon His people the welcome of His Father, redeeming every pledge which had ever been made to their faith when they lived upon the earth, He turns to His Father, who is seated upon the throne of august majesty above, and says to Him, "Here are those whom I undertook to redeem and to sanctify and to save ; here they are, my Father, redeemed, justified, sanctified, washed, without blemish and without spot ; I present them to Thee, and require discharge forever from the trust which I assumed on their behalf." So, having given the kingdom back into the hands of His Father, and, as Conqueror, having trampled His enemies beneath His feet by that stern decree of banishment, "Depart into everlasting fire," it will be found, according to the

testimony of Paul in the epistle to the Corinthians, that He has put down all authority and all power and all rule, and that His enemies are subject under His feet, even to that last enemy, which is death. This right to sit upon the judgment throne, and the awful authority with which He pronounces the sentences to those upon the right hand and to those upon the left, are but a part of the great work which the Lord Jesus came to discharge; and not until He has been seated upon this throne and pronounces those sentences of destiny, is His work entirely finished, so that He can render up His trust to His Father, that God may be all in all.

III. *In the third place, Christ must sit upon this judgment throne in order to bring to a point those two lines of law and grace, upon which God proposes to glorify Himself.* The first relation which the creature sustains to God is one of law; and it is remarkable how God has, through the law, been at pains to show forth His glory. I need scarcely remind you that law consists of two parts. There is the precept which guides, and there is the sanction which binds; and the formal nature of law is found in the union of both: so that, as law, it is entirely destroyed as soon as the connection between those two is broken. If, for example, you remove the penalty and leave only the sanction, that degenerates into a blind and arbitrary threat. If, on the other hand, you remove the penalty and leave only the precept, this deteriorates into advisory counsel. In neither case have you law. Law, in the precept, marks the line of duty; and then, with its penalty, it binds that duty upon the conscience, and, setting forth the whole authority of the law-giver, makes it obligatory upon the creature. Now, as law consists of those two parts, there are two distinct classes of beings whose eternal destiny is wrapped up in the glory which they shall render to God through that law. There are the holy angels that never sinned, whose peculiar office, through all eternity, it shall be to glorify God through the precepts and through the spotless, finite obedience which they, as creatures, shall render to the same. Then the apostate angels, whom Jude describes as "reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day," their eternal doom will be to glorify God through the endurance of the penalty. So that, as to the angelic world, they divide distinctly into these two classes: the holy angels that never sinned, and the apostate spirits that are now in the world of despair —one of whom forever glorifies God through the precepts of the law, and the other glorifies God through its penalty. At the judgment seat, God brings the whole dispensation of law to a close. It is intimated in that

clause of the text which says, "He will judge the world in righteousness." The great principle of retributive justice will there be disclosed; for He who sits upon the throne will reward every man just according to his works. You see, then, how, at the judgment seat, and with Christ upon it, God glorifies Himself through His law.

But there is another method still more grand by which He glorifies Himself, and that is upon the line of grace. He sends forth His own Son from His own bosom, to stand here upon the earth for the sinner, to assume his guilt, to bear for him the curse, to exhaust the penalty on his behalf, to render to that law which he has violated a perfect obedience—an obedience both to the precepts and to the penalty—the only obedience so complete that its peculiar merit is described in Scripture as an obedience even unto death. This also is brought to a point at the judgment seat, as Christ, the author of grace, is placed upon the throne. Grace, as the queen majesty, is there publicly enthroned upon the right hand of the law itself, and reigns with a conjoint authority through all the ages that are to come. Here, at the judgment seat, these two lines of law and of grace, which appear to us to be perfectly parallel, are made at length to converge; and that judgment seat is the focal point where the two glories of Jehovah, as reflected by the law on the one hand and through His grace on the other, meet in their combined splendor. Christ, who achieved the grace by magnifying the law, sits upon that throne to show forth, in His person and through His work, the whole glory of God, as exemplified both in law and in grace.

IV. *In the fourth and last place, Christ sits upon the judgment throne as a public signal that the dispensation of mercy is closed.* Can any demonstration be more conclusive, when the very author of grace becomes the executive under the law for its administration—when the very Being through whom alone God's mercy flows to the guilty, with His own lips pronounces upon those guilty the sentence of eternal banishment? Ah! it is for this that every mouth shall be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God. Where are the cavils? where are the objections? where is the boisterous argument with which men here upon earth impugn the integrity of God's government, and assail the righteousness of His grace, when, at the final judgment, every mouth is stopped and the whole world confesses its guilt before Him that sits upon the throne? The very appearance of the Savior upon that throne warns them that mercy is past, and that justice and judgment have come. There can be no appeal, because there is no throne of grace to which the appeal can be carried and urged upon the ground of

the Savior's perfect sacrifice. The Lamb of God is there transformed into the Lion of the tribe of Judah. It is the very aspect of that glorious Person as the judge of the quick and the dead, that shall strike terror into the hearts of the condemned, and they shall be without argument and without speech and without cavil against Him there.

The particular use which the Apostle makes of the doctrine that Christ is to be the final judge, is as a motive to immediate repentance "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent"—on this ground, "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." Let us analyze this motive in the four directions into which it divides itself.

1. This particular truth is a motive for repentance, first, *because it connects the sin of rejecting Christ with all the terrors of that day.* Men are ready enough to admit that they are sinners; but the evidence upon which they stand self-convicted is in every instance drawn from the law. Because they break this, and that, and the other command of the Decalogue, therefore they know and are compelled to acknowledge themselves to be sinners. Alas! how few feel that they are sinners because they reject Jesus Christ! Go through this town to-morrow; touch man by man upon these streets, as you meet them, with the challenge, "Are you a sinner?" and when the ready response comes from their lips in acknowledgement of the dreadful fact, in not one case will you find this acknowledgement based upon the conviction that they have up to this hour rejected a personal Savior. Yet, if there be truth in the Gospel at all, this rejection of Jesus Christ in the act of unbelief is the sin of sins. It is the one comprehensive sin, which gathers up into itself all other sins against the law and authority of God. As though there were no other ground, "This is THE condemnation, that light is to come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Hear the testimony again: "He that believeth not is condemned ALREADY"—now comes the terrible emphasis—"because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Ah! my hearer, it is something dreadful to sin against law; it is worse to sin against love. It is bad enough to sin against authority, but it is immeasurably worse to sin against grace. It is wicked enough to sin against the divine commands; but oh! the sin against the very Person of God, the sin against that Person when it comes nigh to you in Jesus Christ—the unbelief that rejects God in Christ, God manifest in the

flesh—the rejection of Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person, of Him whom God hath sent, in the infinitude of His love, to redeem us from eternal death—this is THE SIN OF SINS. Yet, where is the sinner's conscience that takes account of this particular transgression? If I lie, I am a sinner; if I steal, I am a sinner; if I bear false witness, I am a sinner: but if I simply turn away from Christ, and say to Him, "Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of Thy ways," conscience does not take cognizance of that transgression, which is in the front of all transgressions, and will be the special count in the indictment at the last day.—Now, my brethren, just because of this, God has placed here in the text, and in all the cognate Scriptures, a connection between the work of Jesus Christ and the terrors of the judgment; in order, by the association of the two, to compel the sinner to feel that he is guilty of an enormous crime when he withholds his trust in the Person and work of the adorable Redeemer. This text and others like it in the Scriptures come to you this day and say, "Reject Christ if you will, but He will judge you by and by; trample under foot the blood of the covenant, by which He proposes to sanctify you, but for that offence you shall account to Him in the day when He shall set His throne upon the clouds and shall arraign you before His bar." And lest you shall continue to make light of that sin, which so seldom touches the conscience, this warning comes to you out of the Scripture, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little:" for God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge you by that very Man whom you scornfully reject.

2. Then, too, this particular doctrine of Christ as the final judge, acts as a motive to repentance, *because it points the sinner to the source from which that repentance can be drawn.* Ah! when the conscience is touched, and man trembles in view of his offence against the Person and grace of Jesus Christ, where shall he obtain the power to repent? The answer is, from an exalted Christ, whom God hath exalted with His own right hand to be—what?—your memory runs before me in the recitation of the passage—"To be a Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." There it is. If a man wants to bow at the foot of the cross and repent of his sin against Jesus Christ, he must look to that Being who is now upon His throne, exalted to be a Prince, and, in being a Prince, to be a Savior. Because He is both Prince and Savior, He gives repentance to Israel, and with it the forgiveness of sins. The text comes and points you to this very exaltation

of Christ. He who is exalted to be a Prince and Savior to give repentance to Israel, is also seated upon the throne of judgment, to pronounce the final sentence against the guilty. When, therefore, your conscience is troubled under the warning of the text, it turns its other side of counsel and of grace; and tells you that before you go to the judgment seat of that exalted Christ, you may go to the throne of His grace and receive from Him the repentance and the forgiveness which will ward from you all the terrors of that day. Since Christ's judicial power is a part of His exaltation, given to Him in reward for His humiliation upon the earth, it not only warns, but it guides and directs the sinner; and tells him to look upon that enthroned Prince, who will give the repentance which will prepare him to stand without fear before the judgment seat.

3. Again, this truth, that Christ is to be our judge, is a motive to repentance, *because it faithfully warns us that the present is our only opportunity.* Ah! we must all one day go to Christ. It shall not be competent to a soul on earth to refuse. If you will not come to Him upon the altar of sacrifice, you will come to Him when He is seated upon His throne of power. If you will not come to Him as the Lamb of God, you must come to Him as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. If you will not come to Him as the adorable Redeemer, you must come to Him as the final Judge, who shall reward you according to your works. In the text, the shadow of that judgment throne is cast before you, to warn you not to waste the moments of this short life; but to see to it that you go to Christ as the Savior before you are summoned before His bar as your Judge. Thus the text, like every other honest warning which is found in the Scriptures, points you to the cross and to the pardon which was there bought with blood.

4. Lastly, this truth, that Christ is to be our judge, *sets forth with terrific emphasis the terrors of that judgment.* I was once asked by a remarkably intelligent lawyer what the phrase meant in the Bible, "The wrath of the Lamb?" It had never struck me before; but the more I revolved it, the more fearful the phrase became. "Why," said he, "it is a solecism; I do not know what it means. The wrath of the lion we can understand, and the wrath of the leopard, and the wrath of the tiger, because it is in the nature of such to exhibit wrath; but the wrath of the lamb—what does it mean?" Ah! my hearers, it means that mercy has passed and that grace has wound up its mission; that not a solitary offer of pardon shall ever be made again; no out-going of power from the Holy Spirit, to draw the soul to Christ, or to purge

the affections, or to renew the will; but the Judge sits upon that throne to say, "Let him that is holy be holy still, and let him that is filthy be filthy still." WRATH OF THE LAMB! It is the most fearful emphasis which even the Spirit of God could put upon the terrors of the judgment day; that there we are to meet no more the Lamb of God, bearing our sins in His own body upon the tree, but to find in the Redeemer himself the stern, uncompromising avenger of justice.

"Yonder sits the slighted Savior,
With the marks of dying love;
Oh that I had sought His favor,
When I felt His Spirit move;
Golden moments,
When I felt His Spirit move.

"Now, despisers, look and wonder;
Hope and sinners here must part:
Louder than a peal of thunder,
Hear the dreadful sound, 'Depart!'
Lost forever,
Hear the dreadful sound, 'Depart!'"

May God save both you and me from this awful doom!

X.

KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST ESSENTIAL TO HOLINESS.

II PETER iii. 18:—"*But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.*"

There are two characteristics by which Christianity is distinguished from every other system which bears upon human conduct. The first is, that it is the only scheme which proposes to *rectify the nature of man* and fit it for the duties it prescribes. All *ethical* systems are but compilations of dry rules, regulating only the external conduct. However clearly they may state duties, and with whatever power they may enforce motives, they can never rise above the office of mere instruction. If man's will be averse from the duties which they enjoin, they propose no remedy, but leave him powerless at the end as at the beginning. Hence all the systems of morality which have been devised on earth, have utterly failed to reform the vices of mankind.

In like manner, all systems of *false religion* abound in rites aiming to propitiate God, or to pacify the human conscience. In either case, the external relations only are affected; the inward nature of man is not changed. But the Gospel, whilst, on the one hand, it proclaims the original law, and even adds to it new and powerful sanctions of its own, on the other hand openly proclaims to the sinner his inability to render obedience to the same. It teaches, therefore, the necessity of a new creation—that, by a divine and spiritual birth, we must be made "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." It discloses the agency of the Holy Ghost, by whom that new birth is effected through which we are brought into the kingdom of God. Not only so: the Gospel presents this doctrine of a spiritual birth as one of its elementary truths. It was the very first utterance of the Savior to Nicodemus—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and when this master in Israel exclaims in wonder, "How can a man be born when he is old?" the

Master replies to him, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" That is to say, if you cannot understand that which is earthly, how can you receive the things which are more mysterious and heavenly? If you fail to apprehend this rudimentary principle, the indispensable necessity of a new birth of the soul, how shall you reach to the higher mysteries of the kingdom of God?

In the great argument for the divine origin of Christianity, if I were driven back to the very last defence, I should securely plant myself upon this doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Ghost; for in the Scriptures alone is that great truth articulately revealed to man. Other systems of religion have their Lords many and their Gods many. Other systems of religion have their incarnations of these Gods, through which they hold intercourse with man. Other systems of religion have their sacrifices and their altars and their priesthoods. Other systems of religion have their ablutions and their purifications, which only avail to the cleansing of the flesh. But it is not until you come to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that you hear proclaimed the absolute necessity of a second and spiritual birth, effected through the power of the Holy Ghost, the quickener. It is, therefore, the only religion suited to the necessities of a sinner.

The second peculiarity of the Gospel is, that *this principle of inward holiness is invigorated by constant communion with a personal God.* All created life is derived. In Him who gave us birth, we live and move and have our being. What is true of the physical life, is still more emphatically true of the spiritual life. There is a sense, according to the Scriptures, in which God alone is holy. He is so by the absolute necessity of His nature. But as to all beings below God, whether in heaven above or upon the earth beneath, the holiness which they possess is communicated; and it must be continually refreshed by personal intercourse with a personal God. Hence these Scriptures reveal God in the personality of His being. They teach that the sinner, by the Holy Spirit, is united with the Lord Jesus Christ; and, through Him, has fellowship with the Father.

These two principles are distinctly recognized in the text. "Grow," says Peter, "in grace." There is the first principle; for, as the scheme of salvation originates in the pure grace of God, the moment the sinner, by justifying righteousness and through regenerating power, is brought into a state of salvation, he is said to be in a state of grace. "Grow," also, "in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ;" there

is the second principle. And the coupling together of these two terms in the text, suggests the line of thought which I desire this morning to pursue: the great truth that A MAN GROWS IN GRACE ONLY AS HE GROWS IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST. The same idea is taught in other passages of Scripture, where the connection is asserted between knowledge and practical godliness. For example, Jeremiah, in the ninth chapter of his prophecy, says: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that *he understandeth and knoweth me*, and that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." [Jeremiah ix, 23:24.] Paul prays, in behalf of the church at Ephesus, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give unto you the *spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him*: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." [Ephesians i, 17:18.] Again, in enumerating the Ascension gifts of the Lord Jesus to the Church, he indicates their end: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of *the knowledge of the Son of God*, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." [Ephesians iv, 13.] The same Apostle prays for the church at Colosse, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being *fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.*" [Colossians i, 10.] And so Peter, from whom the text is taken, in the opening of his second epistle, pronounces this benediction: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, *through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord*; according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, *through the knowledge of him* that hath called us to glory and virtue." [II Peter i, 2:3.] Then, after enumerating the various graces which are combined in the Christian character, he adds, "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor *unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" [Ibid. I, 8.] Now, my hearers, if these things be so, it is a question of practical moment *what is the nature of this knowledge of Christ*, which stands thus connected with our sanctification?

I. I answer, in the first place, that it must be *a knowledge of Christ's Person, as God manifest in the flesh.* Paradoxical as the statement may seem, it is nevertheless true that all the forms of heathen idolatry take

their rise in man's inability rightly to conceive of the being of God. Why, those heathen, in all the ages, have had dim conceptions of the attributes of God; but they were never able to combine those attributes in any single conception of the divine character. The smallest of our Sabbath school children, who can repeat the answer to the fourth question in the Catechism, "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth," exceeds, in the measure of his knowledge, all that was possessed by the Stoics and Epicureans of old. Unable to combine these perfections in one single conception of God, they were shut up to the necessity of personifying each one of them: having Apollo as their god of wisdom, and Mars as their god of power, and Venus as their goddess of love; and, by gathering a senate of these divinities upon Mount Olympus, they sought to make up for the want of the one only living and true God, who possesses all these perfections within Himself. Unable to rise to the conception of God's true personality, He appeared to them a mere energy, residing within the limits of the universe, and only to be recognized by the traces of His power in the sphere of nature. Their dilemma was this: Impelled by their religious instincts—for remember that man, in his essential constitution, is a religious being—impelled by their religious instincts to worship something, and yet an abstraction not being that on which worship can terminate, they were driven to find everywhere in the objects of nature the representatives of the Deity. Sun, moon and stars, earth, air, fire, water, sky and sea; and, as you descend the scale of ignorance and stupidity, birds and beasts and creeping things; and, at last, dumb images of brass, of marble and of clay, are put before the eye as the symbols of the unseen God; that so they may invest Him, the invisible, with personality, and bring Him within the range of their thought and the embrace of their affections.

Now, it is exactly this great want of the human soul which, in the Gospel, is met in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. He is God manifest in the flesh, the word made flesh and dwelling amongst us, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. He it is "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." [Philippians ii, 6:7:8.] The God of the Bible, whom we worship and obey and love, is "God in Christ; reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses

unto them." So that, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, we to-day are precisely in the dilemma of the ancient heathen; and the fearful alternative is before us, either of being atheists on the one hand, or idolaters upon the other—atheists, not in the sense of denying God, but in the sense of being without God; and idolaters, not in the sense that we bow down before images of clay and of brass, but that we bow down before the imaginary conception of Him which is framed in our own thought. This, then, is what I mean by knowing the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, as God manifest in the flesh. We must recognize Him in that complex Person, which is both divine and human; just as we recognize each other upon the earth. As in the recognition of ourselves, we take in the double conception that we are matter and we are spirit: so the conception of Him must take in the double truth that He is God and man in His mysterious Person.

II. In the second place, this knowledge must be *an experimental knowledge, or a knowledge which is founded upon actual intercourse.* We may easily mistake a knowledge *about* a person for a knowledge *of* him. The anatomist may know all the bones and muscles and sinews and joints which make up the human frame, but this does not make him know a single member of the human race. So we may have what I may describe, in this connection, as an anatomical knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We may recognize the two natures which are united in His Person. We may intellectually apprehend the mysterious relations which He sustains to the Father and to the Holy Ghost in the economy of the Godhead. We may know intellectually the doctrines which teach us the covenant relation in which He stands to His people here upon the earth. Yet, after all, we may not know Christ himself. Just as you or I may know the entire history of a man from the moment of his birth to the moment of his death—all the circumstances of his early life, all the influences which shaped his education, all the actions which he may have performed, and all the words which he may have spoken—and yet not know the man himself: so we may know Christ's history from His birth in a manger to His death upon Calvary; we may recite all His wonderful discourses and interpret all His parables; we may recount, in their order, all those stupendous miracles, the signs and wonders by which He proved Himself to be the Son of God with power; but yet, with all this intellectual knowledge *about* Christ, we may not know *Christ himself.* We know a person, even in our human sense of it, only when we are in actual contact of mind and soul. We know of a person when we hear of him by report, or when we simply

see him with the eye; but we know the man himself only when, through the mysterious power of speech, we are able to project our souls into his; and, in turn, through reciprocal speech, to receive his thoughts and feelings into our souls. Now, my hearers, in order to grow in grace, thus we must know the Lord Jesus Christ. It must be an experimental knowledge—a knowledge which is founded upon actual intercourse. We must be able to hold personal communion with Him, just as substantive and as true as that which we hold with one another. Indeed, there is a freedom in the intercourse which we hold with our blessed Redeemer immeasurably surpassing that which we hold with each other; for we can commune, man with man, only as we find words in which to incarnate our thoughts and put them bodily before the eye; but we can commune with our Redeemer, and, through Him, with His eternal Father, without speech. He is able to bend His ear and hear the very thoughts as they are passing through the mind, and the very emotions as they are throbbing in the heart. When we are without speech, and can resort only to the groanings which are unutterable, He that knoweth the mind of man can interpret even those groans and construe their meaning.

III. But, in the third place, this knowledge must be *a knowledge of Christ, as He fulfils His mediatorial offices to ourselves.* Do you notice that Peter, in the text, accumulates the titles of Christ? "Grow," says he, "in the knowledge of our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ." Considering the marvellous terseness and brevity of the Scriptures, its wonderful economy in the use of words, this accumulation of epithets in a single line is eminently suggestive. They are not all needed merely to indicate the party to whom he refers. It had been enough if he had said simply, "Grow in the knowledge of our Lord." If he had said, "Grow in the knowledge of our Savior," it would have sufficed. Or, "In the knowledge of Jesus"—why, that was His familiar name. Or, "In the knowledge of Christ"—that was His personal appellative.—But he accumulates these four descriptive phrases, in order to define the offices of the Lord Jesus Christ: how, as the Supreme Lord, He has dominion over all the creatures; how, as Savior and Jesus, He offers upon the altar the sacrifice which shall take away their sins; how, as Christ, He is anointed by the Father in all those blessed offices of Prophet, Priest and King, which He sustains to His church. When, therefore, Peter says in the text, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ," he means to say that we

are to know Him in the mediatorial offices which He discharges, and in their immediate application to ourselves.

For example, we are to *know the Lord Jesus Christ as the great sacrifice for sin.* When the law challenges the sinner, and his awakened conscience responds to the accusation, there ensues a prolonged altercation between the two. The sinner brings his regrets and apologies; the law replies, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The sinner brings his tears and prayers; but the law allows no place of repentance, though the sinner searches for it with all the remorse of Esau. The sinner brings his promises of amendment and vows of close future obedience; the law reiterates the solemn demand, "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins." The sinner brings his deeds of charity, his alms, his "tithes of mint, anise and cummin," and all his acts of will-worship; but still the law remorselessly presses him to the brink of the pit, and cries aloud in his ear those terrific words, "blood, blood, blood" —"without the shedding of blood there is no remission!" Now, when justice has drawn its glittering sword and has whetted it for execution, the Gospel interposes and says, "Here is blood—not the blood of this poor guilty sinner, but the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world to take away sin; of Him whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past; the blood of Him who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot unto God—take this blood, and with it cancel your just claims." Now, when the law hushes its demands, and a sense of pardon steals over the sinner's troubled conscience and sheds down upon him the peace that is unutterable, tell me if the man, at that moment, does not know something of the Lord Jesus Christ as the sacrifice for sin? And we, beloved of the Lord, after all our shameful wanderings from His service, when that blood of sprinkling purges our consciences from dead works to serve the living God, and we are brought back to new obedience, tell me if we do not *grow* in the knowledge of Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient and only sacrifice for the sins of the guilty?

So, too, we must know Christ in *the prevalency of His intercession.* Turn aside with me for a moment, and I will show you a strange sight. There, in his closet, is the sinner, bowed down with the weight of his guilt, prostrate in the dust, not daring so much as to lift up his eyes to heaven, crying out, in the language of the Psalmist, "According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." Wait and take a second view. See that same sinner rising out of the dust,

until he stands erect upon his feet and turns his streaming eyes to heaven, and, in the fullness of his joy, simply exclaims, "Abba! Father!" And tell me, what wrought the change? What mighty power lifted up that sinner when he was crushed under the sense of his guilt, and enabled him, as an adopted child, to look upon the very face of Jehovah's throne and claim Him in the endearing relation of Father? Ah! it was the Advocate, Jesus Christ, appearing before that throne, saying, "I have purchased with my own blood." In the moment of this effectual advocacy, lo, the blessed Spirit speeds to earth from the bosom of the Father, bearing the sinner's free discharge from all guilt; and, as this pardon is sealed upon the conscience, the man rises from his despair and worships God.

Again, we must *know Christ in His power over us as King.* Brethren, there are moments when we are full of fears, just as the leaf that trembles in the wind; and then there are moments when "one can chase a thousand, and two can put ten thousand to flight"—moments when a sense of power throbs through the spiritual frame—moments when the believer can place himself against the eternal promises of God, and defy the combined assaults of earth and hell—moments when he obtains a grand triumph over the assaults of the adversary—moments when he can put his hand upon the hellish passions and appetites in his own nature and root them out, as a man roots the weeds out of his garden. Those are the moments when we feel the power of the Lord Jesus reigning within us in the supremacy of His grace; "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

And we must *know Christ as the faithful trustee of the promises.* How often is the Bible dark to us—every verse a riddle! We know the meaning of the words, and can construe those words into propositions, but we have no power to enter into and feed upon the truth which they contain. We have a sad conviction that we are altogether outside of the Bible, without power to penetrate into its sweet and precious meaning. And then will come a season of enlightenment, when the trustee, to whom the Father has made over these promises, and in whom they are all yea and amen, opens them all to us, and we seize the kernel of comfort and of joy which they contain. The entrance of His word giveth light and doth us good, even as it does the upright in heart.

To know Christ thus in His mysterious Person as the God-man; to know Him experimentally, by actual association and intercourse; to know Him in all His mediatorial offices, as they are practically applied to ourselves; to know Him as the Lamb of God slain from the founda-

tion of the world to take away sin; to know Him in the prevalency of His intercession before the throne of God above; to know Him in His supremacy in and over us as a King; to know Him as the Great Trustee of the covenant, opening all the promises to our faith: thus to know Christ and to know God in Christ, is, according to the testimony of the Savior himself, everlasting life; for "this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent"—and to grow in all this knowledge of Jesus Christ is to grow in grace. If we "have so learned Christ," and "have been taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus," then are we "renewed in the spirit of our mind," and have "put on the new man which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness."

In applying these thoughts, I see before me three classes of hearers. There are professing Christians in this assembly. My brethren, do we, you and I, thus know Christ? Do we know Him as our Elder Brother, and yet "God over all, blessed forever?" Do we apprehend His person as the God-man, "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person," and yet the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief?" Do we know Christ in "the fellowship of His sufferings" and in "the power of His resurrection?" Do we hold communion with Him in all the offices of His mediatorial work? And, through Him, have we fellowship with the Father? In our afflictions, are we able to pillow ourselves upon His bosom, as did the beloved Disciple at the Supper? When we read the Scriptures, can we recognize the tender and loving tones of His own voice whispering into our ears, and saying to us, "Your sins, which are many, be forgiven you; go in peace?" Are we able, in prayer, to pour our desires right into His heart, and feel that there is sensible intercourse with Him, just such as we hold with any friend upon the earth? Ah! my brethren, if nothing of all this has ever entered into our experience, depend upon it we know nothing of Christ; and if our hopes be not sustaining, sanctifying, comforting hopes, better, far better, that we bring them and break them here to-day upon the altar of God, than to be lured by their false light to perdition.

Perhaps there are awakened sinners in this assembly—souls that groan under the burthen of their guilt, who exclaim, "Oh! that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat!" My poor friend, that is just what you need—to find the God whom you have so long lost. But where shall you find Him? He is in heaven above and in the earth beneath, in the air and in the sea, in the world of the living and in the world of the dead. He is everywhere; but you shall never

be able to find Him until you find Him in Christ. Go where you may, roam from star to star, penetrate the deepest recesses of space, you must at last come back to Calvary, to that spot once darkened by Jehovah's frown—the only place on this guilty earth where you can first catch the beam of His gracious smile. Oh, sinner! if you can utter nothing else, utter the cry of nature. It may be that He who hears the young lions as they roar in the forest, and listens to the ravens, will hear the cry of the broken-hearted sinner when, under the sense of his guilt and of his helplessness, he cries, with the publican, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." And remember that God hides these things from the wise and from the prudent, in order that He may reveal them unto His babes.

And of the careless and impenitent in this house, I have only one question to ask: How comes it to pass that you alone upon this earth fail to recognize God manifest in the flesh? In the days of His flesh, when Christ veiled his deity, there was not a province in nature that did not penetrate the disguise and do Him homage. The treacherous waters moved not beneath His tread, but gave a solid pavement to His feet. The fish that swam beneath brought their tribute money and put it into the palm of His hand. The wild winds careering over the waters, heard His voice speaking in the storm, "Peace, be still," and they slumbered at His feet. The blind eyes, that never saw the light of a mother's smile, opened upon Him who first called the light out of darkness. Yes, and in that hour and power of darkness, when He hung a wailing man upon the tree, and all evidence seemed to conclude against His Godhood, even then nature betrayed no suspicion, but still did Him homage. Great horror of darkness overspreads the sky, shrouding the dismal scene. The sun puts a veil over his face and weeps behind it, because he must gaze upon the awful tragedy. The earth herself quakes in her anguish. The insensible rocks are rent in their consternation. Even hell is moved at His coming, and the very dead start forth from their tombs to welcome Him who is the Lord of the resurrection. Sinner, by these prodigies of nature, I challenge you to day. Will you be harder than the everlasting rocks? Will you sleep deeper even than the dead? All nature has testified against you, and will do so again at the judgment. The sun, when he goes out in darkness, with his last expiring ray, will write your doom. The heavens, when they are rolled together as a scroll, will, on every fold, reveal to you that doom. The everlasting mountains, upon which you shall vainly call to fall upon you and hide you from the presence of the Lamb, will betray you to His searching gaze when they melt like wax at His coming. Oh! I beseech you to know Christ now, in His love, in His mercy, in His grace, that you may not know Him hereafter in the terrors of His consuming justice.

XI.

SPIRIT OF CONTRADICTION IN THE TREATMENT OF THE GOSPEL.

MATTHEW xi. 16:17 :—"*But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.*"

There is a pathos in many of the utterances of Christ upon which every earnest reader of the New Testament has often pondered: a pathos all the more touching because it flows from the most comprehensive knowledge of human misery and guilt, and from the deepest compassion with human weakness and folly. How like, for example, to the wail of a breaking heart is the Savior's lament over Jerusalem: "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." [Matthew xxiii, 37.] Similar in import, though less profoundly sad, is the language of the text. John the Baptist came, the type and representative of the law, with all the rigor of the ascetic, using the stern language of authority and rebuke; and they said of him, "He hath a devil." Jesus Christ came, the Author of the Gospel, representing its exact spirit, mingling with men in all the sweet charities of life, despising neither the Pharisee nor the publican, nor even the repentant Magdalene; and they said of Him, "Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." This contradictory treatment Christ, in the text, compares with the conduct of children who mar their sport by their own petulance and spirit of contradiction. Whilst one wishes to play at a mock wedding, another is content only with the solemnity of a funeral. Then, as if sick at heart with all this perverseness of mankind, our Lord retreats into the bosom of the few chosen, who, through the exceeding riches of His grace, have learned how to appreciate Him; and solaces Himself with the thought that, at least, "wisdom is justified of her children."

These words, my hearers, have all the significance of a parable; and they reveal the inconsistency of men, in all ages of the world, in their contradictory treatment of the Gospel. I solicit your attention this morning, then, to some of the more obvious forms in which this spirit of contradiction is manifested.

1. *In the first place, men complain of the severity of the divine holiness, as it is presented in the Gospel; and yet of the scheme of grace as relaxing the bonds of moral obligation, and affording license to sin.* Undoubtedly the Scriptures found upon the necessary and unchangeable holiness of God, which cannot so much as look upon sin with allowance. They assume, too, the entire perfection of the law, so that it cannot, in any of its features, be repealed or relaxed. God's holiness is essential to His being; we cannot *think* it away from Him. The two fundamental conceptions of Him are that He necessarily exists, and that He is necessarily holy. Neither can be separated from Him, even in thought. You can think of the creature as never having been; you can think of the creature as ceasing to be: but you cannot think of God, except as being from everlasting to everlasting, the same yesterday, to-day and forever. The very moment you assign to Him a contingent or derived existence, you have destroyed your formal conception of God. Just so God is, in His essential nature, holy; and you cannot remove that holiness from Him, without equally destroying your thought of Him. This proposition, if not intuitively evident, may be reached by short and certain deduction. We unquestionably recognize the distinction between holiness and sin. It does not at all matter how those notions were, in the first instance, communicated to us—we have them; and we are able to run the distinction back until we reach its ultimate ground in the very nature of God, and in His law, which is the authoritative interpretation of that nature. Because God is essentially and necessarily holy, therefore His will is holy; and the law, which expresses that will, is utterly incapable of repeal or of relaxation. The precepts are unchangeable, because they present before us His spotless and perfect righteousness. The penalty is equally inexorable, because it discloses to us that justice which is equally indispensable to His perfection. The Gospel founds upon both of these propositions: the absolute holiness of God, and the entire perfection of the law as the expression of that holiness. All its provisions are intended to meet the difficulties growing out of these, in the way of the sinner's salvation.

It is just at this point that the world starts out with its objections: "You make God too severe. Has He no other attribute except that of

holiness? Is He not also a God of mercy and a God of love? Will not that boundless goodness, which is one of His attributes, make some allowance for human frailty?" Seduced by a false analogy from human governments, which are confessedly imperfect, they reason that, if God be supreme, He has but to will it and He can pronounce a general amnesty upon all transgressors. In vain do we reply to all this, that it sets aside the necessary holiness of God, which can enter into no compromise with sin; that the law, being the exact transcript of His perfections, is as eternal as the Divine Being himself; and that to set aside this law, in the administration of it, would be to abdicate His throne and to overturn His government; which would not be an act of goodness at all, but an act of the supremest unkindness and severity to all His creatures. Yet the world is not startled at its own extravagance in reaching these results. It is willing that even the holiness of God should go by default, in order that the Divine Being may be represented as less severe.

Well, then, we reverse the picture, and present God to them as a God of love. We show how His infinite compassion yearns over the guilty and the lost. We tell the sad and yet delightful story of the cross—how, in the fullness of time, God sent forth His own Son from His own bosom to stand upon the earth as the sinner's representative, bearing the weight of his guilt, and making perfect satisfaction to divine justice, in order that he may be saved. We say, "Surely the men who complain of the severity of God will be won by this presentation of His goodness and of His love." But here they spring new objections. They cannot perceive the principle upon which God reckons the guilt of man to His innocent Son. We reply that this infinitely concerns God more than it concerns us; that it belongs to the great Lawgiver himself to adjust the principles of His own government; and that we, the subjects under the same, are not vested with the right of deciding upon the jurisdiction. We represent this scheme of love as simply demanding, on their part, faith and repentance; that the whole salvation wrought out by another is offered to them without money and without price—that he that believeth shall be saved. They retort upon us that free justification, without reference to any human works, gives a free charter to sin; and that the proper inference from the doctrine is, that men may continue in sin in order that grace may abound, turning thus the very grace of God into licentiousness. Such is the spirit of contradiction which the world continually exhibits when the Gospel is presented to its embrace. We show to them the divine holiness, and they are repelled from its severity;

we show the infinite grace of the Gospel, through which that holiness is reconciled with the free pardon of the sinner; and lo! the very men who refuse obedience to every command of God, and shut up their affections so that they do not flow forth to His beauty and grace, become strangely jealous for the honor of the Almighty. The men who swear, who roll the name of God profanely beneath their tongue, become the advocates of the divine holiness; and even charge God's incarnate Son, who comes upon the earth to represent this holiness, with debasing and marring it. You see the inconsistency, and that is the only point with which I am at present concerned. Men are like these children in the markets, who say to their fellows, "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented."

II. *In the second place, look at this spirit of contradiction exhibited by the world in its treatment of the threatenings and calls of the Gospel.* The Gospel takes us by Mount Sinai, "the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire;" and out of the "blackness and darkness and tempest" comes "the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words;" and that voice solemnly declares, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;" and men are solemnly entreated, if they would escape the wrath to come, to lay hold of the offer of salvation. What then? Instantly they bristle in their pride and say that they are not children, who are to be overawed by these ghostly apparitions which are made to play upon the canvas before their eye. Not they! If ever they are brought into the kingdom of God, it must be by gentle persuasion; not driven, but won.

We say to them, "If that be your temper, then we will present to you the sweet and tender calls of the Gospel. We will pipe to you with its sweetest notes of love. We will stand at the foot of the cross and echo the cry of Him who hangs, in His agony and in His blood, upon that tree: 'Come unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved;' 'Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.'" Surely the men who recoil from the threatenings of the law will be persuaded by the sweet and tender calls of the Gospel. But lo! those who were offended at the threat are scandalized at the mercy; and tell you that they are not weak women, to be played upon through their sensibilities. Their lip curls with a lordly scorn of what they consider the mawkish and the sentimental in Christianity: Fit enough for a romance of the imagination, but not to be reproduced in actual life, and made the principles upon which strong and vigorous men shall base their conduct.

Ah ! my brethren, are not the fears and the sympathies which God has given to us, elements of our common nature? Are these principles imbedded in the human constitution for any other purpose than to be appealed unto? Is it not right, if a man be under the judicial displeasure of God, that he shall be afraid of His vengeance? Or, if God opens the portals of His infinite heart, and pours out the whole wealth of His affection upon a lost world, is it not fitting that our sensibilities and our sympathies should be attracted by that exhibition of goodness? But so it is, we pipe unto them, and they will not dance; we mourn unto them, and they will not lament. They turn with equal resistance against the threatenings of law, and against the sweet and tender calls of divine love!

III. Let us turn the leaf to a new record, and see how *men equally object to the mystery and to the symplicity of the Gospel.* The Scriptures reveal God in the unity of His being, and yet in His three-fold subsistence in that unity; and, from that point of view, they proceed to develop the whole scheme of grace as grounded upon this tri-personal distinction in the economy of the Godhead. Because the one God is, at the same time, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, therefore such a scheme of mediation as the Gospel unfolds is possible. By reason of this distinction, it is possible that one shall send and another shall be sent; that one shall rain down from heaven the fire of divine justice, and another shall lay Himself upon the altar of sacrifice, to be consumed by it. Just because there is this distinction of persons, the different parts, which never can be consolidated upon any single person, may, in the scheme of grace, be distributed amongst the three.

But here the rationalist lifts up his voice against all mystery in the Bible. He cannot bring his reason to understand how the one can be three, and how the three can be one. The reason that is inadequate to explore any single perfection of the divine nature, is scandalized because it cannot penetrate the mystery of the very essence of God and show how that essence ought to subsist. Who is able to bring within the compass of his thought God's eternity? What know we of duration, except in the successive moments of time as they fly by us? As we trace with our finger the notches which Time makes upon its tally, we go back by successive steps until we reach that moment which is called in the Scriptures "the beginning;" and there we stand upon the lip of that boundless sea which we call eternity. No thought ever comprehended within itself a being that is unmeasured and unsuccessive from everlasting to everlasting. And yet, will you say that there is not

an eternal God? What conception have you or I, my hearers, of that thing which we call knowledge, except what we gradually accumulate by passing carefully and painfully, and oftentimes with uncertainty and doubt, from premises to conclusions? But does God know after that fashion? Is God's knowledge, as to its very form, at all like the knowledge which man, the creature, has? Does God lay down premises, and reason from these by successive deductions, until He reaches the grand and ultimate conclusion in which all those premises are absorbed? Or does He not know by the simple glance of His infinite mind, "all things being open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do?" And yet will the man who stumbles over the mystery of the Trinity deny that God has knowledge, because he cannot put within the frame of his conception the way in which God knows?

When we seek to soften the mystery by showing that God practically removes the difficulty through the incarnation of His Son; that now, here upon the earth, God is in Christ, and that we may hold personal communion with Him in our own nature and in our own form: the same rationalism starts new objections against the mystery of the incarnation. How can two distinct and dissimilar natures ever be united in one person? How shall the divine nature lie side by side with the human, except it absorb it? How shall the human nature lie side by side with the divine, except it be overlaid by it? How can these two, in their distinctness, co-exist in the one person of the one Mediator, without mixture and without confusion, each having its distinct consciousness? And because they cannot penetrate the mystery of the incarnation, they reject the whole grace of which that incarnate Redeemer is the author.

Plunging from these into the still deeper mysteries of the Spirit, they reject the whole doctrine of the gracious and resistless operations of this blessed Agent, because they cannot see how they are at all consistent with the spontaneity of the creature's own exercises. In vain we protest against any such inference, and show that the full activity of the creature's own nature is presupposed in the calls and offers of the Gospel itself. In vain we plead that the Holy Spirit has power to go down into the complex machinery of man's nature and move in the midst of its wheels, without infringing the liberty with which they revolve upon their respective axles; that, without interfering with the laws of this spiritual economy, He is able to control every power of the soul and bring it into harmony with the will of God; that quickening all by the divine life which He imparts, He can arouse the conscience, enlighten the understanding, purge the affections, and subdue the will—leaving

them all free in their action to obey the law which God gave to each, in the original constitution established from the beginning. But so it is, he who cannot explain the connection between spirit and matter within himself; who cannot point out the tie by which these two dissimilar principles are connected in the mystery of his own being; who cannot explain how thought is the operation of that invisible and spiritual principle within us which we call the soul, and yet is unquestionably conditioned, in all its manifestations, by that pulpy substance within the bones of the head which we call the brain:—so it is, that proud man, scandalized at all this mystery of the Gospel, turns from it with scorn.

Well, if men object to the *mystery* of the Gospel, we will try them upon its *simplicity*. We come before them with the statement that this great system, which reaches up to the heights of the infinite in God—so full of august mysteries, which, like the roaring of the distant ocean, are but so many voices from the infinite and the eternal world, telling us whence the Gospel comes to man—this system, so grand in these mighty mysteries, which reach up to the highest summits of the highest heavens—does yet, in its practical address to the consciences and hearts of men, demand only faith in Jesus Christ and repentance towards God; that, in order to be saved, all the sinner has to do is to trust. Trust! why, it is the very instinct of the creature! It is the earliest and most necessary form in which the sense of creatureship works itself out; trusting to that which is stronger than itself, by which it can be supported and through which it can be directed. And when the Scriptures appeal to this very instinct, and ask that it shall be exercised simply upon the Lord Jesus Christ, lo! these very men, who were scandalized at the mysterious, turn away from the simple and practical in the Gospel. "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?" And so they stumble over the very simplicity of the Gospel, which becomes a scandal in their esteem. So true again is it, that we pipe unto the world and it will not dance, and we mourn unto the world and it will not lament. On whichever side of their nature we seek to make our approach, the Gospel is equally repelled. Men turn away with equal scorn from the mystery and from the simplicity of the cross.

IV. *In the fourth place, this spirit of contradiction evinces itself in the persistent efforts at self-righteousness, on the one hand; and in the perfect despair of the sinner in accepting the righteousness of Christ, on the other.* Why, my hearers, it is one of the most singular features in all human history. You remember what Paul said of his own people,

the Jews: "They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." [Romans x, 2:3.] What a picture of men in every age! Going about, and going about, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they do not submit themselves to the righteousness of God; piling works upon works, just as mountains are piled upon mountains, in the vain hope that thus they shall scale heaven, and secure a place in God's presence with perfect independence of His power. And yet, in all these desperate attempts to work out a righteousness of their own, men do not seem to be appalled with the immense responsibility they assume. I come to such a man, and say that upon this line he must render an obedience to law, which shall be perfect in its spirit, and be rendered to the letter; and the man says, "I will achieve it by a superhuman effort: repressing my passions and corrupt desires, I will compel this spirit of mine to work out laboriously a righteousness which the law shall acknowledge as commensurate with its demands." What an amazing responsibility! I tell that man of the sins of the past. I remind him that it is the special glory of the Gospel that it makes remission for these; and he says, "I will wash out the sins of the past with the tears of a bitter repentance towards God." Oh! legalist, have you stopped to measure the length of God's law? Have you stretched the line of your thought over the breadth of that law? Have you succeeded in sounding its depths—the law which expresses God—which flows out from His very nature—which contains within its precepts and within its penalty those attributes which are utterly incomprehensible to the human reason, and undertakes to give adequate expression to every one of them? Will you undertake to keep that law in its literal meaning and to its furthest extent? What an amazing task has that man assumed who resolves to be independent of God in the matter of his salvation and to work it out at his own charges!

Now, we come to this sinner and tell him of a method that is so much easier, so much simpler; that instead of washing out all these past sins, whose stain is so deep, in the tears of his repentance, he has only to hand them over to Jesus, and He will blot them out with His atoning blood forever; that instead of straining every nerve vainly, in his human strength, to keep the law of God perfectly, here is the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, God's own Son, offered to him without money and without price; and that all that he has to do is just to take it. We plead with him that, instead of spending a long and laborious and

afflicted life in working out a righteousness in his own strength, it is so much wiser to accept the work that has been already done by One who was perfectly competent to the task. And then he is filled with despair at his utter inability to believe. "Oh," is the reply, "this is a beautiful and a glorious salvation, but how entirely beyond my reach! for I can sooner create a world, I can sooner create a universe of worlds, than, of myself, to put forth that simple act of faith which you enjoin." How marvellous it is! Here is a man who feels himself equal to the whole law of God, who can stretch his will over all the commandments, and go down into the very bowels of the curse; who can take the measure of Jehovah's throne, and spin out a righteousness which shall meet all the exactions of infinite justice; and yet, when asked simply to trust, to give up, to make the surrender of all this will-worship, and throw himself, in his helplessness, upon the bosom of Jesus Christ, he is overwhelmed with despair! How strange a conjunction in the experience of the same man! How logically opposite are the two things, and yet how are they found co-existing in the utterances and experiences of the same person! We pipe unto men, and they will not dance; we mourn unto them, and they will not lament. See the contradiction of sinners against themselves!

V. In the fifth and last place, you discover *this spirit of contradiction, in objecting equally to the asceticism and to the mysticism of the Gospel.* Our Savior honestly warned His generation that except a man deny himself and take up His cross and follow Him, he cannot be His disciple. He must come to this point: that he will give up father and mother and brother and sister and wife and children and houses and lands; with the promise that when he has made a perfect surrender to God of all that the world has in its gift, God will graciously give it all back to him—father and mother and brother and sister and wife and children and houses and lands, and a thousand fold more in this present life, and in the world to come life everlasting. Nevertheless, when we state the requisition of the Lord Jesus—that the world, in all its forms, must be given up—lo! men recoil from the asceticism of the Gospel. How can you expect a system so hard in its demands to find acceptance? The young especially, who have such small experience as yet of this poor world, who have not yet seen the bubble burst before their eye whilst admiring the beautiful hues painted upon its surface—ah! how often they exclaim, "Your religion is a thing of gloom: it is a system over which the spirit of gloom broods continually; and I cannot give

up all the enjoyments and pleasures of this bright world in which God has placed me, to accept that which denies me all earthly gratification." And so they turn away from the Gospel on account of its asceticism.

We point them, then, to the joys of God's people—to the inexpressible comfort which flows into the soul when discharged from the sense of guilt—to the sweet peace which steals over us when pardon is sealed upon the accusing conscience—to the privilege of being able to go into the presence of the great and terrible God, feeling that we are accepted as His children, and may lie upon His bosom and look up into His face, saying to Him, "Abba, Father." We seek to describe those positive pleasures which arise from daily communion with God through His Son, Jesus Christ, and those holy anticipations of heaven which take hold upon the inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that shall never fade away: and whilst we seek, in all the gorgeous language of inspiration itself, to depict the joys of Christ's kingdom, they tell us, "You have gone up now into the regions of the clouds; and are painting enjoyments perfectly inconceivable, and which, therefore, are to us purely fictitious." So they turn from the pleasures of the Gospel, as before they turned from its self-denial. We pipe unto them, and they do not dance; we mourn unto them, and they do not lament. Oh! how applicable is this parable of our Lord to the men of our own generation as well as to those of His own! In this spirit of contradiction with which the Gospel is met, how much are men like children who continually mar their own sport by a querulous and captious temper betwixt themselves.

I bring this whole subject to a practical conclusion in one or two suggestions. 1. The first is, that these contradictions annihilate each other, *and prove the Gospel to be true.* How is it possible that any system can be exposed to objections that are so diametrically antagonistic? How is it possible that the Gospel can make God too severe in His holiness, and at the same time destroy the very holiness which it proclaims, and make it an impossibility to Him and an impossibility to the creature? Both allegations cannot hold. One may be true, or the other may be true; but, in the nature of the case, they cannot both be true. If the Gospel has its solemn warnings and threatenings, and if it also has its tender and loving calls, it is because, through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, law has been satisfied and justice has been met. Thus right through the bosom of the law itself is the channel cut, through which the mercy and love of God flow freely to the sinner. It cannot be allowed, even for an instant, that the Gospel is only a system

of mystery, and yet that it is to be rejected on account of its practical simplicity, as beneath the condescension of the creature. How can it be true that the Gospel is too ascetic, and calls for too large a renunciation on the part of its advocates; and also true that it affords joys which the human imagination is utterly unable to portray, and which, though mysterious in their origin, are yet found in the actual experience of men, and are constantly embodied in their language? How can it be true of any system that it shall offer an easy salvation; and yet the condition of simple acceptance be rejected as too difficult by the very men who think to accomplish that work which brought the Savior from the skies to achieve? In truth, these objections are like two hostile armies that tread the plain and draw nearer to each other in order of battle; while the Gospel stands aside, a quiet but not uninterested spectator of the conflict, until the very last combatant on either side falls beneath the spear of his adversary. No, my hearer, I challenge your attention to the fact that a system which is exposed to these contradictory allegations is, by the very force of the charges, proved to be true. And yet, like her blessed Master, it shall always be the fate of this Gospel to be crucified betwixt these two thieves. It shall find the objections coming from the one side and the objections coming from the other side, and yet it shall live in the midst of all this cross-fire. And, sinner, when the Gospel has outlived it all, and meets you, in the Person of its Great Author, upon that judgment seat, remember that there will come the long, long, long eternity to you, in which to continue this unprofitable wrangling forever.

2. But, brethren, "*wisdom is justified of her children.*" Our business, as the children of wisdom, is to appreciate Christ and His Gospel; to show, in the outworking of our experience, that these paradoxes which are continually urged, have their reconciliation through the riches of grace. It is for us to show, by the purity of our lives, the self-denial of our conduct, and yet the cheerful happiness with which we encounter our trials and perform our duties, that there is no foundation for these mistaken pleas against the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. What an assumption is ours! full of privilege, full of dignity—to stand forth, the vindicators of wisdom; and, by the quiet influence of a peaceful, happy, holy life, to persuade the world of its error in all its antecedent judgments; to proclaim that wisdom's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

XII.

THE SECRET OF THE LORD.

PSALM XXV, 14:—"*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.*"

This Psalm has one peculiar feature of interest, in that it represents to us one characteristic, at least, of true prayer. How often, my brethren, when you have put in your petition at the throne of grace, has the thought suddenly flashed across your mind, What right have I to ask for that? It may be a distrust, springing from the insufficiency of your own faith, struggling, in its weakness, to keep abreast of the power and promise of Almighty God. Or it may be a suggestion of the Evil One, striving to cripple you in the performance of an important duty, or, else, to hinder you in the enjoyment of a precious privilege. But whether it be this, or whether it be that, you and I have a thousand times experienced it. Instantly, as we offer the prayer, we seem to put forth the hand of retraction to draw it back, as if appalled at the venture we have made. Just then, with all the rapidity which characterizes thought, we fall back upon some perfection in the divine nature which justifies the prayer; or, else, upon some broad principle of the divine government; or, else, upon some peculiar feature of the scheme of grace; or, else, upon some special promise in the word of God. And when, by this r ction, we have strengthened our faith, we are emboldened to renew the petition and to press it with greater urgency upon the attention of our Father above.

These mental processes are so indescribably swift that they appear to be perfectly blended together; and it is not until afterwards, when we sit down reflectively to analyze and to distinguish them, that we can perceive their distinctness. Thus, in prayer, we find ourselves alternating between petition and meditation. Faith stretches out its hand, upon the right and upon the left, in these holy reflections, gathering up the material which it may afterwards embody and embalm in the petition.

How beautifully this is represented to us in the Psalm which I have

read. David opens with prayer; he continues it through seven consecutive verses; and then, without breaking it off, he simply interjects holy meditations: "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment: the meek will he teach his way." When he has, by these sweet reflections, justified his own confidence in approaching God, he resumes the petition in that most marvellous prayer, exhibiting to us the whole logic of divine grace: "For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great." Having heaved up to heaven this petition, which is so great in its sweep, he relapses into holy musing: "What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose." Now, it is just in one of these interposed clauses of sweet meditation that the text occurs: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant."

It would not be profitable to perplex you with what I may not improperly describe as the critical trifling of commentators upon the particular words of the text; for there is scarcely the shadow of a shade of difference in the renderings which they give. Whether you call it the "secret" of the Lord, or the "counsel" of the Lord, or the "friendship" of the Lord, all these resolve at last into the great sentiment that God, in His infinite condescension, holds the sweetest and most intimate communion with His people; and, in that communion, opens to them an indescribable privilege, and makes the largest revelations of His grace and of His glory. The text naturally divides into three branches, disclosing a wealth of spiritual comfort, which I hope we will endeavor this morning to appropriate.

I. The first topic presented is, THE PECULIARLY INTIMATE COMMUNION WHICH GOD HAS WITH HIS PEOPLE. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." If you choose to analyze the word, it offers this exquisite image: a divan or council sitting down, after the oriental style, together upon the cushion, and holding there the most familiar and confidential intercourse. Oh! what a picture! The unspeakably glorious God, "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders"—before whose majesty the very seraphim veil their faces as they cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts"—condescending to us, sitting down, as it were, upon the cushion with us, holding this familiar and precious intercourse with the redeemed. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." It is just what the Savior announced when He said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words;

and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." [John xiv, 23.] Again, in the Revelation, when He says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." [Revelations iii, 20.] Yes, thus God comes down into our bosom, and whispers confidentially into our ears the secrets of His blessed heart. Ah! brethren, if you are amazed at this condescension of the great God, let me say at least three things which will take off the edge of your wonder.

1. The first is, that *it is of the very nature of blessedness to communicate itself.* Let the human heart be filled to the brim with joy, and the most remarkable feature of that joy is its irrepressibleness. It seems to spring up from the lowest deep of the soul; just as those fountains upon the mountain side, that are fed by perpetual springs which draw from the depths beneath. When the soul is entirely filled with this earthly joy, it breaks over its bounds, and, in its overflowings, communicates itself to all that are around. There is a felt inadequateness in it really to give us the comfort it should, until we share it with others; and when they sit down with us in the holy communion of this joy, then, and not till then, does it seem to be full.

Well, it has pleased Almighty God to say at the beginning of things, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness;" and we can travel up from ourselves to Him, and, in some measure, apprehend how the infinite blessedness that is in God yearns, from the very nature of the blessedness, to overflow from Himself, and communicate to the creatures whom He has formed. The Scriptures speak of "the fulness of the Godhead." They tell us that it dwells in Christ. "The fulness of the Godhead!" There is a remarkable expression in one of Paul's prayers, when he petitions "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." [Ephesians iii, 19.] There is the fulness of God's life; there is the fulness of God's love; there is the fulness of God's wisdom; there is the fulness of God's power; there is the fulness of God's holiness; there is the fulness of God's glory; there is the fulness of God's blessedness. The life, the love, the wisdom, the power, the holiness, the glory, the blessedness, all springing up inexhaustibly and eternally from the depths of the divine nature; until, in the fulness of all these perfections, they overflow and seek, just as the streams which the fountain sends forth, to cut broad channels for themselves, flowing out over the whole world of the creature.

It is of the very nature of blessedness to communicate; and every

good man and every happy man always stands with outstretched hand to bless. Therefore it is so hard to conceive how the stingy man can ever be pious; and hence it is that almighty grace seeks to lift a man out of the isolation and selfishness and stinginess of his own nature, and make him, from the fulness of his own blessedness and goodness, to communicate to those who are about him. Now, if it be of the nature of blessedness that it yearns to distribute, and if that blessedness be infinite in God, it takes away, in some degree, the wonder; and we can understand how this glorious and blessed God should condescend to this fellowship with us.

2. *God, too, has created intelligent beings for this express purpose.* We know not how many orders there are. We know that the angels surround the throne in myriads. There are the cherubim, who bear upon their wings the august throne of the Almighty, and fly through all His vast dominions, upholding His majesty upon their pinions. We know that the seraphim veil their faces and veil their feet with their wings, while they cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts." "I beheld," says John, "and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." [Revelations v, 11.] Whether these innumerable worlds, with which God has dotted the vastness of space, are inhabited by intelligent races, science has not yet discovered, nor has this Book revealed. But we know that upon this earth, which is one of those worlds, God made man after His own image and in His own likeness; giving to him mind, that he might think, and thus be like God; giving him affection, that he might love, and thus be like God; giving him will, which crystallizes into act—the dim yet inexpressibly glorious reflection of the executive agency and omnipotence of the Godhead itself.

As to these creatures in heaven above and upon the earth beneath, we have historical evidence that God has put Himself in communion with them. To the angels there must be representative displays of the divine glory, for John, in apocalyptic vision, declares: "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever, Amen." [Revelations vii, 11:12.] As to man, did not the great Creator walk with him in the cool of the day in the shades of the garden, speaking face to face with our first father, as a man speaketh with his friend?

And when man fell, did not the holy cherubim take their place upon the east of the garden, that they might guard the tree of life, the sacrament of the first covenant, the holy symbol of God's presence with the creature as an object of worship? All through the early ages, did not the great God descend in glorious manifestations to the patriarchs—speaking to Moses at Mount Horeb; appearing to him in the bush burning with fire, yet unconsumed; going before the hosts of Israel across the Red Sea and over the desert, in the pillar of cloud by day and in the pillar of fire by night; appearing to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob, and to the whole succession of the patriarchs? Did not these prophetic theophanies all have their fulfilment in the incarnation—every antecedent appearance of God, in the angel of the covenant under the old dispensation, being but the forecast shadow of Him who was to come, and who should stand upon the earth, God manifest in the flesh? Ah! my brethren, God has created beings, and endowed them with vast powers of intelligence, in heaven above and upon the earth beneath, for the express purpose of having those upon whom He may pour from His fulness forever; and through eternity there is to be a continuous outflowing from that fulness upon the creatures in whom His holy image is found.

3. *Then, look at the provisions in the Gospel for this very communion and intimacy.* There is the incarnation of Christ. It is not without reason that He is so gorgeously described by inspiration as "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person;" as "the word that was with God, and that was God;" as "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" as "he, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." And when you have apprehended that part of the Savior's person, lo! the other side is presented: "The word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us;" "he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." And so the great problem, which lies even in the bosom of false religions—how the great God shall be conversable with the creature—is perfectly solved for us in the mystery of the incarnation. A great bridge has been thrown between eternity and time, and the incarnate Son, walking over it, stands upon the earth which is our home, and reveals to us the glory of His Father; and then, drawing us up by His grace into His own blessed bosom, folds us there in indescribable fellowship with Him. "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

This incarnate Redeemer also, in His adorable work, brushes from

our path every legal obstacle to that communion. In the holy obedience by which He magnified the law and made it honorable—an obedience which was even unto death; an obedience which covered the precept and exhausted the penalty—He has effectually removed every obstacle which the law could interpose between the fellowship of God and the creature.

As I cannot go into the details of this vast scheme, let me only indicate further the office of the Holy Ghost. Awful, but infinitely precious and sweet, mystery of God!—that adorable Person of the august Trinity who goes down into the very machinery of man's nature—the Spirit, the mighty breath of God, free to move as the air—able, like the wind, to blow through the whole of the most complicated mechanism, and play amidst wheels and pistons and arms, and yet not interfere with the agency of any of its parts. Such is this august Person, who comes from the bosom of the Father and of the Son as the very breath and spirit of God—to do what? To take the place of the absent Redeemer on earth, now that He has withdrawn to His Father's right hand in glory, according to the promise to abide with us forever—to take the things of Christ and show them unto us; to bring to our remembrance whatsoever He has said; to seal upon our hearts the pardon which the Savior has purchased, and, in that sealing, to sanctify and comfort us, and make us at length meet for the saints' inheritance in glory. Ah! the provisions which are found in this scheme of grace to carry on that mysterious and condescending communion which God holds with His people! And when you have put all these thoughts together, you can adore, and yet a little apprehend how God, great and glorious as He is, can sit down, as it were, at our side and tell us His secret.

II. LOOK AT THE CHARACTER OF THOSE WHO ENJOY THIS PRIVILEGE EXACTLY DESCRIBED BY THE WORD FEAR. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Of course, this divine communion cannot be indiscriminate. The very promise indicates that it is a matter of special favor. It is granted only to such as *fear* him.

There must be, too, in the party admitted to this communion, a receptive power. It is not every being upon this earth who is capable of holding this fellowship with God. Reason again from human analogies. You and I cannot be intimate except with those who are congenial with us. A man of refined tastes and of large learning may have points of contact with the most obscure and illiterate; but he cannot lie in their bosom in that intimacy which consists in the impartation reciprocally of

the secrets between them. The saint, who has grown up in some measure to the stature of the fulness of Christ, is not able to sit in the seat of the scorner, and listen to ribald and profane scoffing of God. From the nature of the case, communion requires points of contact; and there must exist an antecedent congeniality or sympathy between the parties who thus come together. So when God condescends to hold communion with any of our race, there must be found in them the power to take Him in; points of contact with Him—sympathy with Him in the characteristics that belong to Him.

Now, all that is exquisitely described in the word which is used throughout the Old Testament almost technically to describe a pious man. "The secret of the Lord is with them that *fear* him." There are some extravagants in the church who talk as though it were criminal for the Christian to have any sort of fear of God; and this they deduce from a somewhat perverse interpretation of that passage which says, "Perfect love casteth out fear." The word fear is equivocal, simply because it is used in the Scriptures in very different senses. There are three distinct kinds of fear. There is the fear which connects with *crime;* when the condemned culprit in his cell trembles at the sound of every foot-fall, lest it should be that of the executioner to lead him to his doom. There is the fear which is connected with *bondage;* when the slave cowers beneath the lash of his master. Then there is the fear which is the offspring of *love,* in its condition of subordination; as, for example, the fear of the child. Of course the two first are expelled from the Christian heart. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus;" and we are no longer criminals under the law; and that fear is gone. By His adopting love, the chains have been stricken from our hands, and we are now His sons and daughters. With the spirit of children, we are able to say to Him, "Abba, Father;" and the fear of the slave is gone. Because we are His sons, and God has sent forth into our hearts the spirit of sons, we have that filial fear which is associated with love. Without being tedious, let me indicate rapidly the four elements which, I think, enter into this fear.

1. *It implies, of course, a pervading and deep feeling of awe before the majesty of God.* Brethren, if God sit upon the cushion with us, and whisper to us His secret, remember that He is still God, conscious of all His infinite perfections and glories. If it be God, glorious in holiness, who holds communion with the creature, there must rest upon the heart of that creature the shadow of the infinite, which shall fill the soul with awe. However intimate may be our fellowship with Him,

there never can be any impertinence or trifling familiarity with His awful attributes. In the soul admitted to this fellowship, there will be a solemn reverence, which, like the deep bass in music, gives the key to all human worship: for when you have stricken away awe—and that awe is more profound as we advance in holiness—you have stricken away the possibility of worship. Fear implies that.

2. *Then, fear implies a reverential recognition of God's authority.* Familiar intercourse does not obliterate the distinctions in life. A father may be very intimate with his child—and the great secret of parental management is there: the power to let down, in all the majesty of parental greatness, into the very nest of the child's affections and instincts, and, by genial sympathy, draw up that child so that it shall be hidden in the folds of your heart. But you are constrained also to preserve your authority, which is magisterial under God's grant. However familiar may be your intercourse, the child must feel that you can command. However he may play with you, and confidentially utter his thoughts, he must still know that he is under law. Now, in Christian fear there is always a reverential recognition of the divine authority, and that this great God who communes with us is yet our Lawgiver and our Judge.

3. *Then, this fear implies such a sympathy with the divine holiness as to infuse into us a solemn dread of sin.* Let those who say that there is, in no sense, in the Christian experience a fear of God, expound to me that ascription of praise which comes down to us from heaven: "Who shall not fear thee, oh Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy." Ah! this filial fear which the Holy Spirit works in the heart of the Christian puts him into the closest sympathy with the holiness of God, which is so awful; that holiness which is the pavilion of light in which He dwells; that holiness which is the glory continually breaking from His throne, and lighting up all heaven, and making it independent of the sun and of the moon and of the stars; "for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." So, brethren, when we, by grace, are brought into sympathy with this holiness, we have an indescribable terror of sin—not merely in its consequences, but in its contact. We dread it as we dread the defilement of pitch; and we pray in secret that "every thought may be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Fear includes that.

4. Last of all, *this fear includes an adoring love for God's person,* who comes to us in the sweetness of His condescension, and so throws a cloud over the glories which might otherwise daze us that we lift up

our hearts to Him with a love which is beyond expression. "Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

All these elements enter into every Christian experience, of course, in different degrees; but, according to their development, will be the richness of the disclosures which Jehovah will make when He comes to tell us His secret.

III. This brings me to the third and last division of the subject: THE NATURE OF THE REVELATION WHICH GOD MAKES WHEN HE HOLDS HIS SESSION WITH US. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will *shew them his covenant.*" The subject is large, and I must squeeze it into small compass.

1. *These revelations are only such as are suitable to our earthly and probationary state.* My brethren, if God should undertake to unfold Himself in all that He is, it would destroy the very object for which He has placed us here. If He should make revelations to us of His glory and of His blessedness, such as He makes to angels and to the redeemed in heaven, I suppose these fleshly bodies would not sustain the burden. If the exceeding weight of the divine glory were to be let down upon man here upon the earth, it would crush in the very timbers of his frame. There would not be strength enough in these bones to bear up under the amazing pressure. Why, there are spiritual discoveries made, through grace, to some of the Lord's saints upon the earth, which strain this human body to its last power of endurance; and the soul is obliged to cry out to God to hold back the face of His throne and forbear the discovery of Himself, lest it die. We may, in our presumption, offer, with Moses, that overbold prayer, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory;" but as long as we are upon the earth the same answer must be returned to us: "No man hath ever seen my face, and lived."

Or, if this revelation did not utterly destroy this human frame, it would make us unfit for the duties of life. We would be overtaken with such disgust for the absolute tameness of this pitiful world, if we should ever, with the eye, see God's glory, that we could not fulfil afterwards a solitary earthly duty.

Then, too, if God should make those stupendous disclosures on earth which He will make hereafter in heaven, it would contravene the fundamental law of a probationary state. This life is intended to be disciplinary. Men are children—yes, the tallest of them, the wisest of them, the holiest of them, the largest in intellect and the largest in grace that

ever stood upon these mortal shores, are, until God calls them above, children at school. They may be at this form or at that form in the progress of their education, but they are still learning; and the most of us, alas! have passed but little beyond the alphabet of the knowledge which it is our privilege to acquire. The great law of this disciplinary state is *faith*. He will not, as long as we are in this world, make things matters of knowledge. He hedges up the presumption of the creature by throwing up this wall; saying, "Whatever you feel and whatever you do whilst you are here being trained for immortality and glory beyond the grave, you shall feel and you shall do by the naked power of *faith*. You must take it absolutely upon testimony, because I say it."

I do think that this puts the rationalist at such a discount. It does seem to me that if Almighty God were not so infinitely good, there would be such an awful sneer upon His lip when He looks down upon the rationalist, who, with his inch of reason, undertakes to scan the mighty mysteries of the infinite and the unknown; who, with the tape-line of an earthly experience, when he is only in the first form of his education and at the very alphabet of his knowledge, undertakes to measure the divine proportions, to bound the eternal, to fathom the infinite, to explore the incomprehensible. If God does not choose to disrobe Himself and stand in His nakedness before this presumptuous thought, the creature will turn away with scorn, and refuse obedience to any of His commands. The fundamental law, under which we live in this world, is the law of faith. "He that believeth shall be saved;" "He that believeth not shall be damned." Whatever a man does that is good or great; whatever a man does for the benefit of his fellows, or for the glory of God, he must do under the operation of this principle. Hence much that God might disclose to us He withholds.

2. *These revelations are within the sphere of grace.* The Bible does not profess to teach either science or philosophy. Yet its utterances in reference to both are marked with such caution and reserve that, whatever science may, in its advances, discover, the language of Scripture fits right into it. In all the progress made from the beginning until now, there never has been a clear contradiction between the testimony of God and the final conclusions of true science. Every conflict between the two has been only in appearance, and has found its reconciliation after a little. Hence, the Bible being intended to teach grace, not philosophy—to unfold to us how God can be just and yet justify the ungodly—all the revelations which God makes to us when He whispers to us His secret, are within the sphere of grace. Whenever a man

comes, with his own speculations, or with his interpretations of this Book, and proposes to uncover before you, as upon divine authority, any of the methods of mere nature, you see, in the pretension itself, the mark of imposture and of fraud. This Book simply leads us to the cross and exhibits to us the amazing love of God in the redemption of a lost world.

3 *The revelation which God makes, being a revelation of pure grace, is conditioned by the work of Jesus Christ.* The whole office of the Spirit, as the Savior himself declares, is to expound Christ. He does not whisper the secrets of the future; He does not tell us what is to happen in the years that are to come: but He reminds us of what Christ said when He was upon the earth, brings to remembrance whatsoever He spoke, and seals spiritually upon the heart all those utterances, so that they shall be for our guidance, comfort and sanctification.

4. The revelation which Christ makes of Himself being adapted to this earthly and probationary state; being a revelation within the sphere of grace, which is conditioned by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ; *it simply turns upon the points that are connected with our personal sanctification.* So that, through the knowledge we acquire, we may be better able to serve God, to be useful to our fellow-men, more perfectly to enjoy Him in our own experience, and be made gradually ripe for the realities that are to come. Ah! brethren, does it not stagger you sometimes to think, when you are striving against this sin and that—finding it so hard to conquer this or that or the other besetting infirmity—so little able to stretch yourself out over the measure of that knowledge which God has communicated—does it not sometimes stagger you to think how you are to endure it when you are in heaven? When, in an instant, just in an instant, God picks you up right out of your place, out of your feebleness, when the spirit seems crushed down with the infirmities of the flesh, and puts you right under the blaze of His awful throne, and reveals to you, all suddenly, the glories of eternity? Oh! what a change must be passed over the spirit of a man, before he shall be able to stand amidst the splendors of the world to come! I have tried to compass it in my imagination a thousand times, and have always broken down in the effort to picture the first half-hour in heaven; how to get over that first astonishment; how to stand the outburst of the divine glories when, without a veil, they spread themselves over the spirit, and you stand with all the redeemed and with all the holy angels, and cast your crowns before the throne and before the Lamb. Brethren, when I think of my inability to do it all, of the infirmity which I now feel in rising to those

high conceptions, it does seem at times that it is impossible I shall ever get to heaven—not by reason of anything short in the grace of God, but that it looks impossible so to build up the feebleness of this spiritual frame as that it shall stand in the presence of God's throne and bear those august manifestations. But the revelations which fit us for that are the revelations which God whispers to us in these secret conventions. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." As He opens to us the parchment upon which the contract of grace is written, and unfolds to us its sweet meaning and the extent of its promises, we grow in strength—"unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Thus the Almighty Spirit, through the working of His grace, does make it possible that the weak, sinning, stumbling Christian shall be able to pass through the gates of pearl and sit down upon the mount of God, in the glory of His presence.

I would like, if I had time, to apply this subject largely; but I must gather it up in a sentence. It is this: A religion that does not throb with emotion, a religion that you do not cherish in your inmost soul against all the charges of fanaticism and of madness, is not the religion which this Book discloses, and it is not that which God will whisper to us in the sacred moments of His confidential love. There are guards, solemn and effective, which God throws around His Gospel against all fanaticism. Why, the fact that there is no kind of revelation that He makes of Himself which is not potentially contained within the words of Scripture—this is a guard against fanaticism. A man may come and talk to us of his secret revelations; we take those and bring them to the Word, and if they be not according to the law of these Scriptures, they are not of God. If all the revelation which God makes of Himself is a revelation of grace and comprised within the testimony of the Scriptures, you have a guard against fanaticism in that direction.

Just so in regard to the experiences of feeling. Men may talk of this or that or the other feeling; we take those feelings to the Scriptures. Are they feelings which the Holy Spirit declares He will work in the human soul? and do they rest upon the Lord Jesus Christ? We know the man to be a fanatic and an enthusiast who cannot bear the touchstone of this Word.

My brethren, we must stand before the world, in its blindness and in its folly, and declare that there is a mysterious and holy and blessed communion which the renewed soul has with its glorious Creator and

blessed Redeemer. We cannot allow ourselves to be cheated of the sweetness and preciousness of this fellowship, by the sneers which a cold rationalism may choose to cast against it. If there be dangers in religious experience in the direction of fanaticism, I would rather, for myself, encounter these than encounter the appalling danger of a religion that is without a pulse of life, cold, dead and stiff, existing in pure ritualism upon the one hand, or cold, lifeless formalism upon the other. The Holy Ghost, from the Father and the Son, dwells in the bosom of the church to direct and to comfort. He dwells in the heart of every redeemed soul to seal and sanctify it for heaven. That Holy Spirit does open the eyes of the understanding to behold the glory of God; does purge the affections and draw them forth to God as their centre; does subdue and control the will, so that, like the needle upon its pivot, it shall continually point in holy obedience to the law of God. Whatever there be of defect or struggle in the Christian life is a struggle to do that—to overcome all that withholds us from fellowship with God and communion with the Holy Ghost. Let us accept the Gospel in its privileges, and rejoice in its charter. Let us glory in the rights which it secures to us, and boldly plead every prerogative with which God has invested us before the throne of mercy.

XIII.

THE FAITHFUL SAYING.

I TIMOTHY i. 15:—"*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*"

The text affirms that which makes the Gospel, to whomsoever it comes, glad tidings of great joy. It is the same truth which was announced by the angel to Joseph: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins"—the same truth which was proclaimed by the band of angels to the shepherds upon the plains of Bethlehem: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord;" and which was announced by the Baptist when, upon the banks of the Jordan, he pointed to Jesus, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." It is the same truth which is doctrinally affirmed by the Apostle in the third of Romans: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." It is the same truth which was enforced in earnest exhortation by Peter in his Pentecostal sermon in the streets of Jerusalem: "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." It is the same truth which was invitingly proclaimed by the Savior Himself: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

It is interesting, too, to observe the precise form, as well as the special connection, in which Paul here sets forth the incarnation and mission of Jesus Christ. He proclaims it not as a dogma which is to be received upon Churchly or Episcopal authority—not as a cold doctrine which is to be articulated in a man's creed, as you place a silent

and lifeless statue in its appointed niche—not as a dry argument which is to be proved by syllogisms: but as a great living fact, lifting itself above all merely speculative truth, which is attested by heart-warm Christian feeling—the pith and the marrow of the whole Gospel—the soul and the substance of all genuine Christian experience. He tells us how he "who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," had been "enabled and accounted faithful to be put into the ministry," and how, through him, "the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Jesus Christ." Then, as a matter of personal knowledge, founded upon his own call into the discipleship and into the apostolate, he proclaims the general fact that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners"—a truth which is faithful and a truth that is worthy of all acceptation.

The two terms in the text are far from being identical. The first refers to the *credibility of the statement;* the second to the *intrinsic value of the truth which is found in it.* "This is a faithful saying"—that is, it is a saying altogether *credible:* "and worthy of all acceptation"—that is, when received as credible, it is then a saying that is *infinitely worthy of every man's acceptance* with the most cordial embrace of the affections. Upon these two lines of thought which I have just opened, I propose this morning to enter.

I. As to the credibility of the statement, "that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." The great facts of the Gospel are so familiar to us, by constant repetition from our earliest infancy, that curiosity and wonder are completely dulled. From the first dawn of reason, the story of Christ's birth and of Christ's death has been repeated in our ears by pious parents, training us up in the nurture and in the admonition of the Lord; and we are now utterly unable to go back to the springs of memory and recall the impressions which those truths first made upon us. And if we should, in that early infancy our intellectual powers were not sufficiently expanded to take in the grandeur of the facts themselves. But suppose, my hearers, that we were assembled for the first time, by audible summons from the heavens; and that here to-day, in the full maturity of our powers, we should, for the first time, hear from some agent sufficiently accredited to us, whether human or angelic, this great fact: that, at a given epoch in human history, God himself became incarnate, and, standing here upon the earth, brought Himself under His own law, rendered perfect obedience to all its exactions, and died, in that human nature which He assumed,

a death of suffering and of shame, in order to procure salvation for the sinner: Is there a mind in this house that would not reel and stagger beneath the magnitude of the utterance. Stir your imagination for a little; put yourself into the circumstances which I have just supposed; hear, for the first time, the grand announcement of the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ upon the earth, to take upon His own soul the whole load of guilt of a lost world, baring His bosom upon the altar of sacrifice as the Father draws the sword of His justice and bathes it in His blood: and say if you and I would not be crushed under the tremendous pressure of the utterance. I can fancy, as I picture the scene, that, when we should have sufficiently recovered from the stunning effect of the word, one would rise up here and another there, and say to this herald, "Repeat, repeat; God incarnate?" "Yes." "That incarnate God coming under the law?" "Yes." "Bearing human guilt and satisfying divine justice to save the sinner?" "Yes." And then would come the strong presumptions which our carnal reason might easily suggest against the credibility of the statement: "Can it be true? The thing is impossible."

Now, there are just two presumptions which reason would put forth against such a statement which I will briefly consider; and I select these two because they really include within themselves all the minor exceptions which can be urged against the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. *The first, perhaps, would be drawn from the acknowledged majesty and greatness of God.* The great God, "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises," who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast, who "taketh up the isles as a very little thing," and holds the waters of the sea in the palms of his hands—the great God, who fills immensity with His presence, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, before whose awful throne the holy angels veil their faces, because they cannot look upon the face of His glory—shall such a God veil His Deity within a human form, and stand upon a globe which His power has created, and come under the jurisdiction of that law which springs from His own nature? Put that question to the herald as he comes from the skies to announce the fact to you, and then receive his answer: "Yes; it is a faithful, credible saying, even in the teeth of that exception which you raise, 'that Jesus Christ should come into the world to save sinners;' and the larger your conception of the divine majesty and glory, the more reasonable it is that He should exhibit that glory to you in the face of Jesus Christ, His Son."

This herald would proceed in his exposition to say: "God is glorious

in the infinite nature which He possesses, and in the awful consciousness of it. God is glorious in those perfections of wisdom, power, justice, holiness, goodness and truth, in which that nature works itself out. God is still more glorious and blessed in the ineffable communion of the adorable Trinity; each beholding the glory of Deity reflected from the persons of the others; and the whole wealth of infinite love flowing out from the bosom of the Father, resting upon the person of the Son and the person of the Spirit, and perfectly reciprocated by these in their turn." "But," says the expositor, "this blessed God has determined to pour out these glories in acts which shall terminate upon beings who are exterior to Him, and, therefore, He becomes the Creator—throws out from His fingers into space these vast worlds with which it is dotted; traces, with His mysterious power, the orbs in which these planetary systems shall revolve; places them in relationship to each other, orb upon orb and cycle upon epicycle, each revolving upon its own axis, and obeying, in their grand circuit, as they sweep around His eternal throne, His commanding will. And then He creates beings of intelligence with which He peoples those worlds; endows man with the high prerogative of reason, and lays upon him the responsibility of choice and will; and surrounds these worlds, and these beings in these worlds, with His holy and protecting providence. Thus God, the glorious, steps out from the pavilion of light in which He dwells; comes forth from the awful communion which He holds with the Son and with the Spirit in the solitude of eternity, and, in these acts which are projected from Himself, reveals the perfections of His nature."

"Now," says the herald, "scan Nature; scrutinize Providence; decipher the hieroglyphics which the finger of God has traced everywhere upon the frame of nature, by which His eternal Godhead and power are clearly seen, 'being understood by the things that are made;' and, at last, you have but a partial revelation of the Deity. You see Him only in the exercise of His natural perfections of wisdom, of power, and, it may be, in a general way, of goodness—as you perceive the adaptation of means to ends, and the adjustments in nature to purposes that are benevolent and kind. But where in Nature or where in Providence have you an adequate exposition of the holiness of God, of His inflexible justice, of His boundless mercy, of that love which is fit to dwell in the heart of God, and of the compassion which yearns over the wants and sufferings of His creatures?" Ah! my brethren, it is only in the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ, who, in His personal work here upon the earth, has so articulately wrought out every perfection of the Godhead,

that you have a complete exposition of the Divine Being upon His moral side. Now, mark: It being given that God designs to reveal Himself, it follows, by the necessity of logic, that this revelation must go on until it is exhausted. Therefore, I will not permit the scientist to separate between creation and grace. I will not allow human philosophy to wall up one part of God's dominion and say that this shall be reserved for its special investigations, whilst I must, through the credulity of simple faith, accept the propositions of grace. If the great God begins to reveal Himself in creative acts, and continues the sublime exposition in the outworkings of His providence, all these are but grand predictions that He will follow Creation and Providence by opening the portals of His infinite heart, and, through the person of His incarnate Son, reveal His glory—the glory of His grace, the glory of His life, the glory of His holiness. You see, then, how completely that objection of natural reason is rebutted. It becomes altogether a credible thing, in the face of this antecedent presumption, that the great God, who begins to reveal Himself in creating worlds, will go on to reveal Himself by redeeming worlds; and give higher notes of praise to the holy ones that worship around His throne.

2. *The second exception is the anomaly of saving one being through the obedience and merits of another.* "I cannot," says the objector, "understand the principle upon which God takes my guilt and lays it upon His innocent Son. I do not understand the principle upon which God takes the righteousness of that Son and puts it upon me. I do not see, when law covers with its jurisdiction all beings, how it can be anything else than that every man must stand for himself, to be saved or to be punished just according to the nature of his own works."

Now, in the outset, before I handle this particular objection, let me say that it would be altogether more modest and more safe to remand the entire matter back to God. If any being understands the law, it is God who gave it. If there be a being who comprehends the principles upon which the divine government is administered, it is that august Being who sits upon the throne and wields the sceptre of law. And if there be a being in all this universe who is personally concerned in upholding the integrity of His own administration, it is this King Himself, seated upon the throne. You and I have not one ten thousandth part of the one-millionth of the interest in this matter that the great God has. Every attribute of His nature requires that whatever be the provisions found in the scheme of mercy, they shall not, in the least degree, contravene the principles of justice and of truth. Why, the

justice of Almighty God is such that it is not possible for Him to do a thing that is not right. Therefore, whether we can penetrate the mystery of His policy or not, it is a matter of simple modesty and simple safety that we shall remand every one of these difficulties to Him, and be satisfied with the fact that it is His ordination. Pardon me if I say that my whole nature revolts from putting Almighty God upon the defence against the criticisms of the creature. If it were not that sometimes, in the most honest doubt, a man finds himself stranded upon a hidden reef; and if it were not for the hope that the hand of relief may buoy him up so that he shall float in safety, I would seal these lips in everlasting silence from offering any sort of apology for the great God, or for the principles upon which He administers His empire. It is reason enough to every candid and thoughtful mind that God does it; that He does everything, not according to His pleasure simply, but in infinite goodness and righteousness and truth.

You confront me with the question: "How comes it to pass that I can be saved through the obedience and merits of a Being who is altogether distinct from myself? How is it possible that my sins can be laid upon Him, who is altogether innocent of transgression?" I reply, the exception is exploded as soon as the fallacy is indicated upon which it is based. The fallacy is this: You look upon Jesus Christ as being only a man, just exactly as you and I are; under the jurisdiction of law, bound to render obedience for Himself; and, therefore, you cannot understand, upon the principles which we recognize upon earth, how there can be the transfer of our guilt to Him and of His righteousness to us. Now, my hearer, Jesus Christ never was merely a man. There never was a moment in which He was not the God-man. Perhaps it is difficult to say at what particular moment the human nature is completed in any one of us by the union of the soul with the body. Prior to birth, the very instant the living soul exists in union with the body, human nature is complete. At whatever moment the eternal Son assumed human nature with a true body and a reasonable soul in conjunction with His divine personality, Jesus Christ existed—not merely a man, but always the God-man.

You say that the Father had no right to lay upon the Son your sin and mine. But what if that Son, the Father's equal, should voluntarily consent to that arrangement? What if the great Lawgiver, seated upon the throne, pitying the misery of His guilty subjects, should say, "I choose to infuse into this law the element of mercy. I choose to bring out not only the justice which that law illustrates, but my infinite and

eternal love. I will impregnate this law, which is so hard in its demands and in the exaction of its penalty, with the principle of mercy and with the principle of love, so that these shall be coordinate elements in the administration of my government throughout all the ages of eternity." I want to know who has power, even in his thought, to forbid the Lawgiver doing that? Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the eternal Father, hears His voice saying, "Who shall go for us? whom shall I send?" He instantly responds, "Here am I—send me; I delight to do thy will, oh! my God." It is not one creature substituted in the place of another creature, bearing a guilt which he never himself contracted; but it is the eternal Lawgiver, the eternal Son of the Father, coming down in the perfect voluntariness of His own will, assuming this guilt, and, in the exercise of that sovereignty which belongs only to the Godhead, choosing to show to the guilty and lost how good and gracious and merciful He is, as well as just and supreme in power. There is a story told of an ancient Roman magistrate, who pronounced upon a criminal before his tribunal the sentence which he had incurred—that, for his fault, the two eyes should be put out. But the criminal who stood before the bar of that judge was his own son; and whilst the integrity of the magistrate hesitated not an instant to inflict, even upon his own born child, the sentence which he had incurred, there was, in the bosom of the judge, the yearning of a father. And after he had pronounced the sentence according to the letter of the law, he stepped down from the jndgment seat and said, "Take one of his eyes and take one of mine. The law says it must have two eyes: I will give one of mine; I will show the tenderness of my love for the offspring of my loins by giving vicariously an eye for one of his." Oh! this is but the faintest shadow of the glorious love of the eternal God, manifested equally by the Son, when that Son comes to earth and takes our place and works out our redemption and saves a lost world through His sufferings. See, God the Lawgiver wants to be merciful, wants to save, wants to bless; but He cannot do it at the expense of law. The law is eternal, like its Author. The law is the transcript of His own perfections. He can no more blot out a letter of that law than He can destroy Himself. If there be mercy shown to the sinner, it must be in the bosom of law. That mercy must cut its way right through the heart of the law. Therefore the eternal Son takes upon Himself the form of the guilty and the legal relations of the guilty, standing under the precepts of the law for the guilty, standing under the tremendous curse for the guilty, bears the sentence of the guilty, bows His neck to the executioner's sword, and

goes down into the darkness and humiliation and shame of the grave. I wish to know why, in the absolute sovereignty which determines these transactions, the infinite God and the supreme Lawgiver has not the right to take upon Himself, incarnate in our nature, the whole burthen of our guilt, without contravening any moral principle which we recognize as just upon earth?

Then, too, Christ was not only always God and man, but he always was the representative and head of His seed. He never stood upon the earth, and is not now in heaven, an isolated Being, standing apart from all others, but is always the representative and surety and head of all those whom the Father gave Him in the covenant. So that when Christ, as that surety, works out a righteousness through personal obedience, there can be no other disposal of that righteousness but to give it to you and to me. It is a mediatorial righteousness, wrought out for mediatorial ends, and it can be applied to no other except mediatorial purposes. Jesus Christ, who renders this obedience, needs it not for Himself. He never was a transgressor under the law. He was always "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." He does not need this justifying righteousness in order to His own salvation; and there it hangs up uselessly against the walls of heaven, unless God, in the sovereignty of His grace, chooses to reckon it to the sinner, for whom it was rendered. Evidently the exception is removed as soon as reason comes to be instructed in the constitution of Christ's person as the God-man, and in that federal relation which He sustains to the redeemed. It is, therefore, "a faithful saying;" and whatever may be the antecedent objections which our reason may prefer, we must accept it, according to the designation of Paul, as a faithful saying and one worthy of our belief.

I will not pause to investigate the minor criticisms, because, as I said before, they all resolve at last into the one or the other of these two; but pass on to say

II. That this is not only a faithful saying, but it is worthy of universal acceptance. THE INTRINSIC VALUE, THEN, OF THE TRUTH CONTAINED IN THE STATEMENT is what we are next to consider.

1. You see the value of Christ's righteousness in the fact *that only through it is it possible that we can have assurance of our salvation.* There are but two ways in which the sinner can stand accepted before God—either upon the ground of works or upon the ground of grace. That is to say, either because we deserve it by our works, or because somebody has undertaken it on our behalf who deserves it. The two

really, in the last analysis, resolve into one. Obedience must be rendered to law in both of its parts, whether it be our obedience or that of our surety. The real distinction between the two covenants of works and of grace consists simply in this: that, in the one, the works by which we are to be saved are our own works, and, in the other, they are the works of the substitute and surety, who has undertaken them in our behalf

Now the question arises, upon the ground of our works, is it possible that you or I can positively know that we are to be saved? I put aside the question as to human ability, although you know that the sinner is absolutely devoid of it. Paul says "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "No mere man," as our Catechism teaches our children, "since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God." Lay aside this question, however, of ability, or, rather, inability on the part of the sinner; take it for granted that you and I can obey the law of God; the question is, can we ever know, through our obedience to that law, that we are saved? Ah! my hearers, where is the human thought that has ever taken the soundings of God's infinite law? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou know! It is as deep as that hell to which it consigns the sinner; what canst thou do? It is broader than the earth and wider than the sea. This law, which expounds God; under which is administered a holy and perfect government; which expresses the holiness, justice, goodness, wisdom, power and truth of God—can you measure it? Can I? Can you go over its length? Can you traverse its breadth? Can you drop the plumb-line of your thought down into its depths? Can you take the soundings of that law? Oh! it is as the seaman upon the broad ocean, who heaves out his lead from the bow of his vessel as it plows through the waves, and if he is passing at the moment over some mountain that throws up its peak near the surface, he may touch its top; or, if he be drawing towards land, as the floor of the sea shelves upward to the beach, he may possibly touch with his lead the gray sand that lies at the bottom; but who ever sounded the abysses of the sea? So, my hearers, we may touch here and there, while passing over some of the shallows in the law of God; but in its breadth and in its depth it is beyond human conception. Why, when Adam was put under it, and life was promised to him upon the condition of his personal obedience, did not God find it necessary to institute a particular test in order to try the creature's integrity? In the mercy which was poured even into that dispensation of law, did not God

restrain the temptations to which our first parents were subjected, to one form of offence? and, in reference to that, were they not most particularly guarded, so that they must be utterly at fault if they sinned in what was so plain and tangible? Thus utterly unable is the creature, in the finiteness of his nature, to take the measure and proportion of God's infinite law.

Brethren, see how different when you come to the obedience of Jesus Christ. He knows whether He has kept the law or not. That law is but the expression of His will; and if He knows His will as it gave the law, He knows His will as it keeps the law. There is the public evidence of its acceptance, when the Father raises Him from the dead and seats Him at His own right hand, and especially in the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Now your anxiety and mine is not whether Christ has perfectly kept the law for our salvation, but only whether you and I have, by an honest faith, accepted it; and the instant we have the testimony of consciousness and the super-added evidence of the Holy Spirit that we have received Christ and His righteousness, we have the most perfect assurance that we are saved; and this is the only ground upon which that assurance can be had. If the choice be submitted to us, we must instantly say, with Paul, I desire to "be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

2. Again, you see the glory of Christ's righteousness *in the fact that it is a federal righteousness*. All God's dealings with our race in reference to salvation are by covenant; and there are but two: the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. God's plan from the beginning has been to save every individual of our race, *not by his personal obedience to the law, but by the obedience of his surety*. He has dealt with man in this matter of salvation through a covenant; and he does not disintegrate the race and deal with each one of us isolated and alone. Here is the moralist saying, "I will go up to the judgment and say, 'I have kept the law, and I challenge admission into heaven.'" I fancy that I can sketch the scene upon the canvas before the eye, as this one lone straggler edges his way to that throne, holding up his personal obediences; and there comes the stern voice from the throne, "Fall into line! fall into line! Who stands for you? who is your surety? In whose name do you come?" Hence it is that there are but two classes before that judgment seat—those on the right, those on the left; the

sheep here, the goats there; those who hear the only two sentences: "Come, ye blessed," or, "Depart, ye cursed." I know how deep these sentences of mine are drawing this morning, and how they will fall with startling effect upon the ears of some in this house, when I deliberately say that there are but two beings in all this vast universe of God who can possibly save any one of us; and those two beings are the first Adam and the second. You must go back to him out of whose loins you sprung in the Garden of Eden, that miserable old defaulter, and stand by him in his bankruptcy and ruin; or you must accept the offer which the Gospel presents and take the suretyship of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the sole alternative before us. Adam, the first representative, having failed in his trust, the second Adam comes and stands upon the platform of that same covenant, and works out the federal obedience which was required, and redeems, by suffering and by blood, his wretched and lost descendants.

3. *This righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is intrinsically valuable, because it affords an adequate reason to Almighty God for pardoning the sinner.* I use the term in its philosophic sense, and, I trust, with the profoundest reverence, when I say that God is a moral being, has a moral nature, and acts according to it. As a moral being, having a moral nature, whatever He does, He does for a reason, and a reason that is to Him sufficient and good. He may not choose to disclose that reason to us, and this makes him *sovereign;* but He never acts without a reason or He would be *arbitrary.* This is just the distinction between a being who is sovereign and one who is arbitrary. God cannot be arbitrary, because he must always act for an adequate reason. He may be sovereign, because He may not choose to disclose it to us. What we know not now, He may reserve for revelation hereafter.

Can your obedience or mine constitute a sufficient reason why God should save us? If you keep the whole law in its letter and in its spirit, do you deserve anything for that? Are you not obliged to say, in the language of the Savior, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do?" When you obey, are you not bound to obey? If you admit the idea of obligation, that excludes merit. There never can be merit in simply doing the things that we ought. I will tell you where the confusion arises—in not distinguishing between merit *absolutely* considered and *relatively.* Here is an enthusiastic teacher presiding over a hundred boys. He wishes to stimulate them, and he offers certain prizes to those that do

best. Now, when at the end of the year, these competitors appear before him, and he adjudges the award, what will he say to those who are successful? "If you had not done all that you have done, you would have been flogged. In doing all that has gained this prize, you have not deserved anything. You were bound to do it anyhow. Reward or no reward, benefit or no benefit, you were under original obligations as a pupil to do that thing. But out of pure favor on my part, I chose to distinguish between those of you who have done well and those of you that have done better. You merit this reward only from my own proposal of it, and you only merit it *relatively* as compared with the others, who have not done as well; but *absolutely*, as to the thing itself, you are not entitled to the slightest credit, for merely performing your duty." Just so with us, when we go up before that throne, the Judge says, "I will look upon your works, not as a ground upon which I give you eternal life. That rests upon an entirely different basis. I will give you eternal life through that surety who stands for you and renders obedience to my law. Your personal obediences are valuable for other ends; and I will consider them only as evidence that you really belong to the surety in whose name you come, and that you have really accepted the righteousness which He has offered." Obedience cannot, then, constitute the reason why God should bless us with eternal life.

But how is it with the voluntary righteousness of Christ?—voluntary, not only in the sense that it was cheerfully rendered, but that it was, in the first instance, *optional* with Christ whether to render it or not. He was under no antecedent obligation to come under that law. It was perfectly optional with Him either to undertake the work or to decline it. Therefore, when, through His own choice, He comes under the law, there is an infinite merit in that act of condescension. Look, too, at the stupendous sacrifice, when, upon the altar, He makes His very soul an offering for sin. And see the radiance of His divine nature shed down upon this human obedience, and rendering it glorious in the sight of God. You remember that Moses said, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me"—the type and the antitype—the first, the typical Moses there upon the summit of Horeb, hidden in the cloud, talking with God face to face, receiving from His hands the law, with the two tablets of stone on which it is engraved. Lo! he descends slowly the sides of that venerable mount until he reaches the foot, and there is all Israel in wild play, engaged in the orgies of their idolatrous worship, as they dance around the golden calf; and waxing hot in his righteous anger, the holy

Moses throws down the tables of stone, and they are broken to pieces. It was not an act of petulant anger. It had in it a typical signification. It was his testimony that Israel had broken covenant with God, of which that law which he was bearing in his hands was the symbol and the bond. Conceiving the whole covenant as made void, he breaks the instrument which testifies to it, and thus pronounces to Israel the doom which they have incurred. But now the second Moses, of whom the other was but the type, comes from the bosom of that cloud where He had been speaking face to face with His servant, down the sides of this mountain, and gathers up these fragments of stone piece by piece, fitting part by part, joining letter to letter, cementing those broken fragments with His own precious blood. Then, having restored the broken law to its original integrity, He gathers up all that light and glory which belong to Him as the ever blessed God, and pours their full radiance upon those restored stones, magnifying the law and making it honorable forever. In His immortal ascension, He goes up into the presence and glory of His Father, and hangs up against the walls of heaven this glorious righteousness by which He sustains the divine government, and magnifies the divine law, that it may be a splendid reflector, gathering upon its face the awful lustre of the glory and holiness of God, reflecting them upon the creatures, who shall worship and adore forever. "The Lamb is the light thereof." So, brethren, our salvation is eternally secure, not only from the faithfulness of God, who can never go back upon His word; but because, behind that faithfulness, there lies the glorious obedience of our Head, always presenting to the Father a sufficient reason why He should continue forever to bless His people with His love.

4. *There is the connection between our justification and our sanctification.* It can only be mentioned here, without enlargement, as showing the value of the Savior's work. It is not enough that God should decree His favor to the sinner, who must also be made capable of enjoying it. God can take no one into His bosom who is unholy. A scheme of salvation must therefore provide for the regeneration and sanctification of the soul, as well as a justifying righteousness. This Christ has done in purchasing for us the gift of the Holy Ghost, and in uniting us to Himself by faith; so that from Him, the fountain head, we draw the holiness and virtue in which we are rendered meet for the saints' inheritance above.

But I must dispense with this important topic and hasten to conclude

with two reflections. The immediate object of the sinner's faith is the perfect sufficiency of Christ in that righteousness which He has achieved; and it is just this which the Scriptures are continually presenting to us. Now, a man may say, "I do not know whether God intends to save me; whether, in His secret decree, He has predestined me to glory." Why, my hearers, if God should show that thing to us, then the direct object of our faith would be God's decree, and not the Savior. Therefore He will not let us know anything about it, except through the results which His own grace shall produce within us. These Scriptures simply show the Savior on His cross, achieving our redemption—working out the righteousness by which we may be justified: and upon this the general offer and call of the Gospel are based. When you and I, upon that general call and offer, embrace the Savior, appropriate His righteousness and make it our own, then, through faith, He becomes our personal Savior, and we are entitled to all the promises of the covenant. The immediate object of the sinner's faith is just the sufficiency of Christ to do that which He has promised to do in His blessed Word. You have not to go up to heaven to bring Christ down, or into the deep to bring Him up from the dead. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." [Romans x, 8:9.]

Then the clause with which the text concludes—"of whom I am chief." Was Paul insincere? Did he really believe that he was the worst man on earth? The solution is perfectly simple. You and I can have a sense of our own sins which we cannot have of the sins of others. It is just the nature of true humility to say, as Paul does in the text, "of whom I am chief." I may not be as bad as my neighbor; but then I cannot take his sins and lay them over on my conscience, as I do my own; and, therefore, I cannot feel in reference to his sins exactly as I feel in reference to my own. And when, under a sense of guilt and responsibility, I take up these sins and feel their burden and shame, I can, without exaggeration, exclaim with Paul in the text, "of whom I am chief."

My hearers, I began this discourse by imagining a herald coming from the skies and making the proclamation of the text. Ah! upon this text which I have sought to expound to-day, I am that herald; and now I want your answer, which I may bear to my King. "It is a faithful saying that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners:"

Do *you* believe it? It is worthy of universal acceptance: Do *you* accept it? You say you *want* to accept it. Well, if you want it, take it. You say you will *try* to accept it. Why, it is not a matter of wanting and of trying: but it is a matter of obeying, and of obeying at once. Suppose I go to that Parish Prison, and stand at the cell of a condemned felon; and as the iron door turns upon its creaking hinge, I hold out in my hand a free pardon from the Governor, and say to him, "Here is a pardon, perfect and full, which will strike off your chains and restore you to freedom again. Will you take it?" "I *want* to take it." "Well, in heaven's name, if you want to take it, why don't you take it? It is not a thing to *want* to take, but it is a thing to *take;* and to take at once as soon as it is offered." Suppose the poor wretch says, "I will *try* to take it." "Why, it is not a thing of trying at all. You have only to put out your hand, and I will place within its palm the document which sets you free." "I am so stiff from being in this cramped posture so long that I cannot stand erect." "Sheriff, strike off those fetters from his limbs, and though he be half dead and have no ability to stand erect, let him be free. Let him out into the open air; let the light of God bathe his face, and the air of God bathe his form; and then, in the consciousness of his emancipation, he will stand up in the power and in the glory of a freeman." I go to a set of conspirators who have been convicted of treachery against the government, and I say to them, "The son of the King went and knelt at the throne, and prayed for you that your treason might be forgiven; and the old King, as he sat on that throne, said, 'My son, this is a matter of more importance to you than to me, for I shall very soon hand over the sceptre of this kingdom to you as my heir; and now, if you will take the responsibility of letting these conspirators out to practice new crimes against your authority and power, it is your concern more than it is mine. If it is in your heart to plead for them, I will grant a free pardon, and you shall countersign it with your own name as my son and heir, and bear it to these men when they are upon the field ready to meet their doom.'" I come, as the herald of that King, to these traitors, as they stand with their bandaged eyes before the platoon of soldiers, every one of whom has his musket charged with the fatal ball, and the officer, with the red sash and drawn sword, ready to give the command which will lay them dead upon the earth: I come to them and say, "Here is a full pardon, granted by the wise and gracious King, sued out by the tender-hearted son and heir; and the only condition is that you shall accept the pardon and be loyal subjects under his government, and love most tenderly the

gracious son who has procured it." These men say, "I *wish* I could take it; I will *try very hard* to take it." I say to them, "It is not a thing of trying or of wishing just now. Here are the soldiers drawn up in array before you, if you could only look through the bandages upon your eyes; and in five minutes you will be dead men upon the ground. In God's name *take* the pardon, and be once more free and happy." Just so I come to sinners condemned under the law of God, awaiting the hour of execution ("He that believeth not is condemned already"), and I extend a free, full, gracious pardon, sealed, signed and written in the very blood of Him by whom it was purchased; and they say they want time to consider. Why, isn't that rebellion? You want time to consider whether you will take the pardon or not. Ah! my hearers, now is the accepted time, to-day is the day of salvation. While I plead with you, before I stretch out these hands in the prayer in which I will lay you before the throne of grace—ere you rise up and stretch out your hands with mine in that prayer, make your decision. It is the birth of a thought, and it is done for eternity.

XIV.

THE ALMOST CHRISTIAN.

ACTS xxvi, 28:—"*Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*"

There is not upon record a more noble specimen of forensic eloquence than Paul's defence before the tribunal of Festus. Instances there have been where stirring appeals to human sympathy have lifted judgment from her seat, and disabled justice in the utterance of her stern decrees. Instances there have been where guilty judges, making law the instrument of vengeance, have but timidly done their office, and have quailed before their scowling prisoners. But here stands a man upon his defence, and a whole nation are his accusers. He is arraigned before a heathen tribunal, and that to answer simply for his conscience. Yet, under both these disadvantages, speaking upon abstract and refined questions of religious belief, and making no appeal to the alloy of human weakness, the Apostle succeeds in dropping entirely out of view his own cause. The judge sits upon his seat, capitally convicted at the bar of his own conscience, and is found almost suing at the feet of the prisoner in chains before him. He must have a cold heart who is not moved by the moral sublimity of this scene. Here stands Paul upon his defence; and he not only reverses the anticipated sentence, but, as if by magic, he changes place with his accusers. Nay, clanking his chains before the throne of his judges, as they sit in their purple and their power, he submits himself as the object of their envy—"I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." By some interpreters, men of large reputation for learning and for acumen, this is construed as the language of irony and scorn; or, if not that, as an idle compliment intended to close the discussion and waive the Apostle politely from the bar. Neither of these opinions seem to me justified by the narrative. Paul had just rebuked the rudeness of Festus by his

memorable reply, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness:" and surely he was not wanting either in ability or in disposition to rebut the profane mockery or the hypocritical complaisance of Agrippa. Besides this, he has just appealed to the King as one perfectly conversant with all the principles of Judaism and with the claims of Christianity, and as having at least a speculative faith in those Scriptures which both acknowledged. "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." It is in reply to this challenge that the language of the text fell from Agrippa's lips, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." I cannot, therefore, understand the language except as a serious, though, perhaps, reluctant and temporary testimony wrung from Agrippa as to the truth of the Gospel. Under this view, it is singularly interesting as a proof of Paul's eloquence, but much more instructive as covering a truth which, alas! too many in every age must attest, who are almost but not altogether persuaded to be Christians. In order, then, to make a profitable use of this passage to day, I propose to consider, in the first place, some of the influences by which men are brought up precisely to this point; then, in the second place, to consider what hinders them that they do not pass over from the almost to the altogether.

I. As to the first of these inquiries: WHAT INFLUENCES BRING UP DIFFERENT CLASSES OF MEN PRECISELY TO AGRIPPA'S POSITION, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." To this I answer,

1. *That many are attracted to Christianity as a system of speculative truth.* It is marvellous the amount of knowledge which the Scriptures convey. It is the only record of the creation; telling us the origin of things, affording precisely that knowledge which supplies to the systems of human science the ring-bolt by which all these outward phenomena are linked to the power which is adequate to produce them. It is the only book which gives the history of man from the beginning in the first pair, constituting the first family, expanding into tribes and into nations, until at length we reach the periods which are recorded in profane history. It is the only authoritative account which we have of man, of his nature, of his powers, and, of course, of his responsibilities. It is the only explanation of that mixture of good and evil which we see everywhere in the world, and which, without explanation, remains the constant scandal of human reason. It is the only source of knowledge as to a future state and what the conditions of that state may be. It is the only account we have of the personality of God, of His moral perfections, and of the principles of His government.

If Christianity came to men simply as a philosophy, undertaking to instruct them in those transcendental facts which can only be known upon testimony, consenting to sit at the bar of human reason to be accepted or rejected by it as an umpire,—I solemnly believe that it would receive universal and glad acceptance, as immeasurably transcending every system of philosophy that has been devised upon the earth, and as giving the only adequate solution of the great mysteries and problems of human life. But now, when that Gospel comes to men saying that, independent of all this speculative knowledge which may be gathered from the mere letter of the Scriptures, there is an interior knowledge of those sublime mysteries which can only be had by the renewed in heart, then they pause at the vestibule of the splendid temple that lifts up its columns and its dome before their sight, and fail to pass from the porch into the sanctuary within; because the first requisite of that spiritual knowledge is the submission of the heart to God in the acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, from the innate love of knowledge which man has, and which in the learned is so cultivated, as they pause at the threshold of that temple, they heave a painful sigh for the loss of that which is withheld from their sight—*almost* persuaded to be Christians in order that they may gather that spiritual knowledge which lies within the system, and yet unwilling to accept the conditions upon which it can alone be had.

2. In the second place, there is another class *who are fascinated by the beautiful morality of the Scriptures*, and would fain be adorned with it. Multitudes flatter themselves that they are in love with virtue, but in no instance is it that virtue which is willing to be compared with the law of God and to be measured by that perfect standard. As your eye ranges over the different Ethical systems which obtain in the world, you discover in them all three grand defects. (1) They fail in perfectly grading the various relations which men sustain in life, and, therefore, in perfectly adjusting the various duties which grow out of them. There is felt, in the inquiring and honest mind, the want of some great principle that shall run as a scarlet thread through all these earthly relationships, and bind them into unity, and to which all relations and all duties can be immediately referred; giving a perfect standard of virtue wherever it is practised. Christianity exactly meets this difficulty, when it undertakes to adjust the relation of the sinner to God; which supreme relation controls all the minor and relative duties which we owe in life. It is very easy for the moon to revolve around the earth when the earth, in obedience to the great law of attraction, moves in her proper orbit

around the sun. So, in all the minor relations of life, we move with ease and with comfort in the discharge of their respective obligations when we have been enabled to obey that great law which binds us to the person and to the throne of the God who made us.

(2) In human ethics there is felt the want of an adequate motive that shall be always present and always operative upon the soul. Hence the incompetency of all human schemes of reformation. Motives they do present to the mind and to the conscience; but motives of an earthly origin and which are instantly paralyzed in the presence of fierce temptation. You want in the practice of virtue, even according to human ethics, a motive that is born of God; a motive that comes down from heaven with a divine strength, which is present with us like the air we breathe or the light we see, or, rather, like the very presence of God, moving with us wherever we are, in the light and in the dark, in moments of comfort and in moments of distress. How perfectly does the Gospel supply that great ethical want when it presents the fear of God and, as included in that fear, the love of God—the reverential and adoring love which the renewed heart has to God as its blessed Father above; controlling, as a motive, all the actions of the heart and, therefore, all the movements of the life.

(3) The third and fatal defect in all human morality is that it simply shapes the external conduct, and has no power to renew the nature that is within. Brethren, even we have a scorn of hypocrisy—an internal loathing of ourselves when the sepulchre is white indeed without, but within is full of rottenness and dead men's bones. If that be the verdict which, in our ethical decisions, we pronounce upon a virtue that is hollow, unsubstantial and only beautiful in the external view, with what indignation and contempt must the holy God look down upon the man who is utterly unclean within and yet who observes, in his external conduct, all the proprieties and decencies of life. But what can human systems of morality do in this regard for us? They can mark out a path of duty, and press with motives more or less strong upon the conscience to pursue that path; but if man's nature be averse and his will disinclined, they have no power to go into the inner sanctuary and change that from which the outward act must flow. Need I tell you how Christianity solves this difficulty in the renewing and sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost; when the Gospel not only, by its blessed law, states what we ought to do, but, by the mighty power of the Spirit reigning in the heart, brings every thought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ?

It is easy to see how men of large views, as they scan these defects in human morals, and see how perfect is the ethical system of the Gospel, may sigh to be all that this Gospel would make them. Yet, when they come to understand that, in order to be adorned even with the morals of the Gospel, they must have the faith of the Gospel, must undergo that spiritual renovation to which I have already alluded; like the class of which I have already spoken, they pause at the threshold of this temple, satisfied with being *almost* but not altogether Christians —pacifying these yearnings of the soul by vain and idle wishes that terminate in nothing.

3. *There is a third class almost but not altogether persuaded to be Christians, through a purely selfish desire for happiness.* All men wish to be happy. It is the supreme instinct of the creature, springing, as it does, from that law of self-love which is dominant within every one of us. Now, what are the defects of worldly happiness? There are three, just like those which I have already specified in regard to morals.— (1) There is, for example, in worldly happiness this characteristic: that everything which is enjoyed palls, the instant we make it supreme; and is satisfactory, just in proportion as we make it subordinate. I have no language in which to describe this thought as I desire; but it is marvelously true in every man's experience, if he would only take the pains to analyze it. You can never make this world a supreme object of pursuit without destroying its charm. Singular as the paradox is, there is absolutely no form of worldly enjoyment which renders satisfaction except as you are in the act of abandoning it: you have what you give away, and what you keep you lose. It is true of the world in each one of the three forms in which it presents itself to our embrace.

Look at the *pleasures* of the world. How soon they pall upon the taste by repetition! Only as they are used in the way of simple recreation, merely to refresh the spirit that is weary and jaded by toil; only when we turn aside for a moment from the solid work to which we are called and by which we are for a season exhausted; only as these pleasures of sense spring up by the wayside, and we crop them as we pass along, do they afford a real satisfaction. The instant man or woman becomes a lover of pleasure, converts the pursuit of it into an employment, devotes day and night to its enjoyment, the very act which throws it up into this supremacy dissipates its charm, and the world has no power to please. Long before the cup of pleasure has been drained to its dregs, the taste sickens at the sweetness of the draught, and the cup of delights is put away impatiently from the lips.

Look at *wealth*. After a man has enough to eat and drink and clothe himself and provide for those who are about him—the very moment he reaches the bounds of honest competency in life—the only enjoyment beyond that in wealth is to give it away. If it is a thing to be carried, it might just as well be stones as gold. If the burden which the man has upon his back be a burden of gold, it will gall and chafe just as much as if it were made up from the coarsest pebbles that you pick from the earth. Only a given measure of this world's goods can any man consume, even in the largest extension of his tastes and of his desires. As soon as that boundary is reached, the true enjoyment of wealth is in its abandonment—the right distribution of it—the opening of the hand in broad charities; in becoming a blessing to those who are around us in life; or, with a noble public spirit, building up the institutions of the land and pushing the world forward in its career of improvement. So it is that, after a certain point is reached, the only enjoyment of wealth consists in its renunciation.

Then, how perfectly monotonous *power* becomes when it is supreme. Let the throne be so firmly established that there cannot be a solitary will rising in insurrection against it, and the despot sits upon it in all the desperate loneliness of his supremacy. The very exercise of his power is wearisome through its monotony; and it becomes a source of enjoyment only when it is grandly used for the benefit of the race. There is this grand defect, then, in all the systems of mere wordly enjoyment: that sooner or later they pall upon the taste. The very instant man makes this world the object of his pursuit, it loses its power to please.

(2) Then, in seasons of pain and sorrow, ah! how philosophy fails then—when the unseen hand strikes away the props, and we fall; when those black clouds let down upon us with the tremendous pressure of sorrows and bereavements; when the world becomes to us a desert, and all the springs of consolation and of joy are dried up! It may be a mistake upon our part; it may be that Time, the great consoler, shall, after a little, reconcile us again to the tastes of earthly enjoyments; but at the moment, in the bitterness of the soul, we feel that only a divine support can uphold us. The highest form which earthly philosophy has ever assumed in reference to pain and sorrow, is Stoicism; but, brethren, it is unlovely to the last degree. What a pitiful resort, when a man can only escape from the suffering of sorrow by converting himself into stone, and being equally insensible to the pleasures of joy! Ah! is that all that human philosophy can do for a man in his trouble—to hold

up the Gorgon's head before his eye and petrify him? Must a man lose all the sweets of association with his kind, all the enjoyments of earthly love, be insensible to all the endearments of home, in order that he may escape the pain when those earthly ties are severed? It seems to me that the purest instincts of our nature rise in rebellion against a philosphy like that. The true philosophy, the philosophy which comes down in these Scriptures from the heavens above, cultivates the sensibilities of the human heart and renders them delicate to the last degree. Yet it puts that tender and sensitive spirit, which feels so keenly all the sufferings of earthly disappointment and sorrow, in sweet submission at God's throne—able, with a perfect acquiescence of will, to say to Him, "Not what I will, but what thou wilt;" "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

(3) Then you see the defect in worldly happiness, that however perfect it may be while it lasts, it terminates with death. Shut down that horizon which bounds the earthly view; shut me up within it as in a pavilion, and say that it is all I am to know, all I am to experience, and I feel that human life is the bitterest of all satires. What! Give to man a soul such as he has, capable of such achievements; rising to the cope-stone of heaven, and with his wierd finger describing the orbits in which planets and systems move—ranging through all the departments of nature and gathering up the stores of knowledge which God's own hand in the beginning hid away in these pigeon-holes of his great cabinet everywhere: charge this heart with these strong affections that are shooting out in all directions and knitting, as the tendrils of the vine, to every object which they touch upon the earth; fill him with the sweets of knowledge and with the joys of love; and then cut it all short at three score years and ten, and tell him that the whole of the beyond is a blank; and I say that I feel this life to be a satire. Did God put forth his wisdom and power to create a being as unsubstantial as the very vapor which exhales from the earth at his feet? And yet the worldly man who undertakes to be satisfied with this poor earth finds at last, when he comes to the grave, that he resigns it all and goes back to the earth just as naked as when he came from it: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither." Oh! brethren, God has not dressed us after this sort, with this furniture of affections, with the sweet and precious and holy instincts of nature, to make us naked there; but we shall go across the border, we shall pursue our unbroken being in the far beyond. As this Gospel teaches us, we go up with all this furniture of knowledge and of affections, with all

these sanctified impulses and instincts, and join the blessed population above, walking upon the stars themselves as the pavement upon which we tread; and we shall go up through the shining hierarchy, until we cast these treasures, transmuted into adoring worship, at the foot of the everlasting throne.

Now, when a man comes to see the vanity of this world and, in comparison with it, the joys of the Gospel, he might well sigh in his spirit and wish that it were his. When the saint speaks to him of the inheritance on which his faith is fixed, and the joy to which his hope is constantly looking, I can well understand that the worldly man may say, with Balaam, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." But when the solemn condition is put before him, "Ere you can obtain these joys or possess that inheritance, you must bow at the feet of Jesus Christ"—unwilling to make the submission, he heaves a sigh and contents himself with the wish of what will never be his portion—*almost* but not altogether persuaded to be a Christian.

4. There is a fourth class who adopt the language of the text: *They are those who seek to escape the irritation of natural conscience, or else indulge an easy sympathy with what is graceful and attractive in the Gospel.* Conscience! It is the organ of God's law. It is that in the breast of man which forms the point of attachment between the creature and the Lawgiver. It is that vicegerent of His government which the Lawgiver has placed in the human soul, who shall repeat His precepts and bind them with His sanctions: and however conscience in the breast of the sinner may be weakened or misguided or debauched, it cannot wholly, even in the worst, be paralyzed. It will, to a greater or less degree, discharge its solemn functions; and be, in the bosom of the sinner who will not repent, simply a tormenter. When this Gospel tells him that the only way by which conscience can be pacified is through the blood which secures the pardon before the tribunal above; that when the blood has been carried up before the throne there, it is brought down and held before the throne here; that as the great Lawgiver, seated upon the throne of majesty and power above, pardons through the blood that has been shed for sin, so must the sprinkling of that atoning blood purge him from an evil conscience to serve the living God—ah! when a man comes to see what that blood effects, I can understand how he shall say in his secret soul, "Oh! that it would sprinkle me, and that I, through it, might in my conscience be brought into harmony with God." Almost persuaded! We look upon him in our affection, and say, as the Master did to the Scribe in the Gospel, "Thou

art not far from the kingdom of God." It seems as though the very next exercise of that conscience and of that heart would be an act of total surrender to Him who has redeemed us with His blood. And yet, satisfied with the wish, which for the moment pacifies the conscience, the man turns away from the cross, *almost* but not altogether persuaded to be a Christian.

And are there not multitudes of gentle temper and easy sympathies who are moved by the pathetic representations of the Bible? You cannot depict the vanity of human life, but their eye is suffused with tears. You cannot touch with any degree of pathos upon the sorrows that fall upon man as his earthly lot, without stirring to their depths all that is tender in their nature. When you describe the sweet condescension of the Son and Heir of the Father, coming from His bosom to earth, taking our nature, assuming our guilt, bearing our shame—you cannot tell the pathetic story of the cross without touching the springs of emotion within. You cannot go through the life of Christ—those acts of beneficence, those miracles of power and of goodness which He performed upon the sick and the lame and the halt and the blind, relieving everywhere the distresses and sorrows of mankind, without drawing out a kind of affection towards a Being that is so gentle and good. And then, as you come to the last tragedy, and lift the veil that hung over the soul of Jesus when, in the garden, he sweat as it were great drops of blood, or depict that more fearful depression of His spirit when He cried out, "My God, my God; why hast thou forsaken me?" they weep just as in the theatre they weep when the tender and the tragic are exhibited to them upon the boards. These natural sympathies are easily aroused; and when expended upon religious objects, they are sometimes construed into a species of religion, and may prove a dangerous snare to the soul. It is to be feared that some of the most amiable of our race are lulled into a fatal security by mistaking these merely natural affections for spiritual graces; and deeming themselves qualified by these for the full enjoyment of God. They are at last but *almost* Christians. These things which are brought in the Gospel as an influence to bear upon them have had their effect, and they stand at the border which separates the two kingdoms; but, alas! remain on this side, and do not pass over into the peace and joy which are beyond.

II. It remains now to consider, WHAT HINDERS THEM THAT THEY DO NOT PASS FROM THE ALMOST TO THE ALTOGETHER.

1. In the first place, *these parties have no thorough conviction of sin*

as committed in the sight of God; and, therefore, they do not labor under a sense of guilt. They have a sense of sin as a disturbing element in their own experience, as a thing that annoys them, as a thorn in the flesh, as an element of unrest. It is something that hinders them from being as good as they would like to be, as perfect as they desire. They have, therefore, feelings of regret and shame when they look upon this and that and the other sin, because it robs them of an ideal perfection at which they are aiming. But they do not look upon sin in the light of God's throne. They do not feel that it is committed against the law and authority and person of Almighty God. There is no weight, heavy and dark, resting upon their conscience, of guilt in the sight of God's holy law. Hence, they do not feel the need of a Savior. When you talk to them about atonement, about the altar, about the sacrifice, about the blood, why you might just as well babble in the Sanscrit. There is not anything in them that responds to these ideas. They do not feel the presence of God's justice bearing down upon them. They do not feel the sharp point of the penalty pressing in upon the conscience. They have, in short, no deep and awful sense of guilt. They do not cry out, as the Israelites at Mount Sinai, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Until the Holy Spirit convinces them of sin and, through that sin, of their guilt, and causes them to recognize, as the first and immediate want of their soul, a daysman who shall stand betwixt them and God and cover their sins with His atoning blood, they will be just as they are now to the end of their days—almost but not altogether Christians.

2. *Others are hindered by looking at religion as though it were a matter of reason only, and not just as truly a matter of the heart.* Why, how men talk about the Bible and about the Gospel, just as they would talk about Aristotle and his philosophy; wanting this thing explained and that, sitting in judgment upon all the high propositions of the Bible, a book that is a revelation, and just because it is a revelation therefore independent of all this criticism, and which will not submit to this sort of interrogation. This Bible comes with its dogmatic authority and says to the sinner, "You are in your guilt; you are under the pressure of the law; you are going down to eternal death; here is salvation free and full." Is it a time for a man to fold his arms, and put on the spectacles of wisdom, and pick flaws here and there, and criticise and sit in judgment upon a revelation which comes out from the eternal and the infinite, to tell what could never be known except it were delivered exclusively upon a divine testimony? This Gospel demands that the

heart shall have its play no less than the intellect; and when it speaks to the wants of the nature God has created, every one of which is satisfied in its provisions, then that Gospel is just to be instantly and heartily embraced. Men think that, because reason must be exercised in religion, therefore religion is to be judged absolutely by reason; that it belongs purely to the speculative understanding, not involving the affections of the heart. They lay the flattering unction to their souls that all that is needed is a little more persuasion to overcome the difficulties in their path, and then they will easily accept the Gospel. Why, if you could settle every scruple, if you do not change that carnal mind which is enmity against God, and which lies at the root of all this opposition, the man will still remain at the border of the kingdom, *almost* but not altogether persuaded.

3. Again, *the earliest features of experimental religion are exceedingly repulsive.* Repentance, the going down upon one's knees, saying to God and saying honestly to one's self, "I am a sinner"—ah! brethren, self-love does not like the attitude. We recoil from the self-renunciation which it involves. Therefore, because the Gospel presents first that aspect, that we shall, in humility and penitence, confess that we are nothing before God, men turn away from it with a feeling of bitterness.

There is, too, *that terrible venture which has to be made in the exercise of faith.* There are some two or three hundred of you in this house who have passed through it. You know the agony of that struggle when you stood face to face with the mighty issue that God's Spirit joined with you; when you had just to close your eyes and make the venture, cutting loose from all hopes and all dependencies and all efforts, and nakedly trusting in the verbal pledge of Him who said "I will save you." Ah! how it crossed all the instincts of your nature! how it went against that law of self-preservation which has been well called the first law of our nature, which causes a man to move the very pillars of heaven and earth to save himself! It is the most difficult and the last thing he will do, just to suspend all these agonizing efforts and be saved by another.

Then, the entire self-abnegation which the Gospel requires; heading up, as is, alas! too often the case, in some one controlling sin which the man feels he cannot give up! How many men are there in this house, men of business, who come to this church every Sabbath day and listen to my preaching, and feel, as they sit here, that this is a duty which they ought to perform, to come to Christ and give their hearts to Him, and yet go out of these doors with this feeling: "Well, if I become a

Christian, I must give up this and give up that;" and the decision is, that they will remain as they are and still do what they are doing, and religion must go by default. They trust the chances of the future, hoping that, at last, just as they are going over the precipice into the boiling depths below, some mighty hand will pluck them out of the jaws of the second death. Am I speaking falsely? Am I making accusations against any, which there own consciences do not this morning sustain? If I become a Christian, then I must join the church." Yes, you must join the church, because the church gathers in the Lord's professing people. "Well, I don't want to do that." Very well, you make it the issue upon which you lose your soul:—not that joining the church is in itself essential to salvation, but your refusing to go to Christ because that is required of you, is fatal. "I cannot come to Christ unless I give up this habit or that propensity." It must be given up, or you will lose your soul. The Scriptures do require perfect self abnegation; houses and lands, father and mother, brothers and sisters, wife and children. There must be in the soul that comes to Christ a perfect willingness to lay all down at the feet of Jesus, if, in the very next instant, He gives it all back. This is the surrender which the Master requires of us: that He shall be the all and the in all. We must be brought, if we would enter the kingdom of heaven, to this point of surrender: surrendering will, surrendering intellect, surrendering power, surrendering everything —laying ourselves, mind, heart, soul, conscience, all, at the mercy seat, to be consecrated by the blood with which we are there sprinkled; and in the chastened and sanctified use of all these powers we shall come to higher knowledge and to a holier service beyond the grave.

Oh! my hearers, that I had Paul's eloquence! But even Paul failed to bring Agrippa over; and possibly, probably, I shall fail too. It is sad to feel that you will go out of this house to-day just exactly as you came in, no better, no nearer the kingdom, no more disposed to give your hearts to Christ than when you entered these doors. I can only ask God to have mercy upon you, and to bring you to see the light of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. I can only implore the interposition of that Almighty Spirit, by whom you shall be "made willing in the day of His power." But it will be a dismal fall from the very gates of heaven into the blackness of darkness forever. *Almost persuaded!* yet ALTOGETHER BANISHED at last!!

XV.

GOD'S GRACE IN PROVIDENCE.

ROMANS viii, 28:—"*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*"

The promises of God shine from the pages of Scripture, as the stars shine from the face of the sky. As the eye wanders over those innumerable silver points in the dome of heaven, it fastens here and there upon one of more than special lustre—one "bright particular star," which fixes the gaze. So, as the mind roves over the promises of the Gospel, it fastens, as by a spiritual instinct, here and there upon some that are more comprehensive, more full and complete than others. I have just repeated one of them: "All things work together for good to them that love God." If we could summon before us the generations of the redeemed who, in the days of their trouble upon earth, staunched their wounds by this gracious promise, we should find our own experience ten thousand myriads of times multiplied in theirs. For, is there a child of God in this assembly who has not in his sorrow taken out of the Bible this one word, and laid it as a balm upon his aching heart, and felt the sweetness of the assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God?"

Look at the *comprehensiveness* of the promise. Paul does not say, "*Some* things work together for good." He does not say "*Many* things," nor yet "*Most* things;" but, without restriction or qualification, he says, "ALL things work together for good to them that love God." We, in our poor wisdom, frame our plans, and the feeble texture falls to pieces almost as we are weaving them in the loom, and then we seek to patch them with this afterthought and with that, until, disappointed in every project, we fall in our despondency and cry out with Jacob of old, "All these things are against me." It is not until we can lie prostrate upon the bosom of such a promise as this that we are relieved of our petulance, and become again patient before God. Yes, not until our faith looks up to the infinite *wisdom*, which is able to take the things

which are the most doubtful and contingent, and work them in as integral parts of His own great plan—not until we can rise to the infinite *power*, which is able to take the things which are the most stubborn and contradictory and bend them to the accomplishment of His own purpose —not until our faith rises to the infinite *goodness*, which comes down into the core of every sorrow, and takes the sting and the pain out of every grief—are we able to appreciate all the comfort that lies in a word like this: "All things work together for good to them that love God."

See how the Apostle puts it in his triumphant language at the close of this chapter: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor power, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." [Rom. viii, 38:39.] Between the two extremes, as in a mighty parenthesis, the whole of human life is included. Here is death upon the one extreme, and life upon the other—principalities and powers; things present, things to come; height and depth; and then, as if something might possibly be omitted in the long enumeration, Paul throws in at the last the exhaustive word, "nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." As I repeat this you easily recall that passage of Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians: "All things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours: and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." [I Corinthians iii, 21-23] O, brethren, see the golden chain, as the one end of it is fastened upon the eternal throne above, whilst the other is let down upon the earth; until, in its grand circuit, gathering us within its folds, with all our temptations, with all our sorrows, with all our toil, with all our conflicts, it too is drawn up and fastened above: all things, at the first, flowing out from God, the great Creator; all comprehended in Christ as the great circuit is accomplished below, and then all things in Christ flowing back to God as their final end. "All are yours: and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Then the adverb "*together*" lends emphasis to the promise: "All things work *together* for good"—a most significant hint of the checkered scenes through which we all pass in life. Is it not very much like a checker-board? Here are the black spots, and here are the white; and as the figures move through the game, they stand now upon the black and now upon the white. So, when God, in the administration of His

inscrutable Providence, moves us, as the figures upon the chess-board of life, we stand to day upon a sunny spot, and the favor of God smiles down from heaven, and the heart is filled with unspeakable satisfaction and delight: and then to-morrow the shadow falls upon us, and we shiver in the cold; clouds gather over the face of our sky, and hang lower and lower, and gather in their blackness as they swoop down in their descent, until at length they burst in some terrific storm, and our home is prostrate in the dust. "All things," says Paul, "work together for good;" and we are to take the two sides, in the relation which they sustain to each other, before we can understand the meaning of God's providential dealings with us. The wise man, in that great sermon recorded in the Old Testament, proclaims: "In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him." [Ecclesiastes vii, 14.] Prosperity! adversity! Why, they are, the two arms of God's shears, when He goes into His garden and prunes His trees; and these two arms, by a mighty leverage, are brought so as cross each other and cut us in the crossing. All things work for good, but only as they work *together*. I have not a doubt that God gives to every child of His on earth just about as much happiness as he can afford to bear. I am perfectly satisfied that He lays upon him no sorrow which he ought not to sustain. There is a perfect wisdom in the mixture of the ingredients in our cup. If our life were one of unintermitting sunshine, and only prosperity were experienced, we would grow fat, like Jeshurun, and kick against God's authority. If, on the other hand, we should experience only what is bitter and adverse in life, I suppose we would become, by the very constitution of our nature, morose and petulant. But God pours the two together into the cup; just so much of prosperity and just so much of adversity, to draw out our affections to Him, and then, by the pressure of affliction, to render us the more mellow in our service and in our obedience. All things work for good and all things work together for good.

Next you have described *the character of those to whom the promise is made:* "All things work together for good"—to whom? Not to everybody, but "to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Have you never, in your reading of the Scriptures, been struck with the dualism that runs through the whole? Why, there is not an isolated, lonely truth in all God's Book. On the contrary, the great doctrines of revelation are sent out two and two, just as the twelve and just as the seventy were, by the Master, sent through-

out Judea and Samaria. Each truth has its fellow; and you find the truth either upon the one side or upon the other, only as you view them in their conjunction. God having established a most blessed marriage between these truths as here sent forth in pairs, they mutually check and qualify each other. Suppose I throw a ball into the air; I may follow that ball, thinking only of the projectile force which sent it out from my hand, and imagine it pursuing a straight line. Science comes and tells me of the resistance of the atmosphere, and of the power of gravity, which are two forces that I have overlooked in my calculation; and, by the combination of the three, the ball, instead of moving forward upon a straight line, describes a parabolic curve, and comes down again to the ground. Here is a grain of corn growing upon its stalk. You gather it in its ripeness; you grind it in a mill; you bake it and put it upon your table, and it is nutritious diet. And yet, by secret distillation, you may extract from that grain of corn the poison which, probably, in this unhappy world of ours, has slain more victims than either famine or the sword. Just so with God's truth. We may separate it in the secret chemistry of our own thought, and run off with a half truth; which, just because we have parted it from its fellow, by which it is qualified, becomes a lie. Thus the truth, which God ministers in His word to be the nutriment of the soul, will become its most destructive poison.

Need I illustrate this by reference particularly to the doctrines of God's word? There is the Trinity. Your mind may fasten so exclusively upon the one side of that dual doctrine, the absolute unity of the divine essence, until you shall become of necessity a Socinian. Or you may, upon the other hand, so fix your mind upon the other side of this dual doctrine, and think of the personal distinctions in the Godhead, as to lapse, before you are aware, into absolute Tritheism, and worship three Gods. It is only when you have taken the two doctrines—that God is one, and that God is three: one in the absolute unity of his indivisible essence, and yet that undivided essence subsisting in the distinction of the three persons—it is only then that you have the whole truth in regard to the being and person of God. Take again the person of Christ. He is God, He is man. It is only when you take the two sides of His Mediatorial person, and behold the two as they co-exist in Him without mixture, without confusion, without blending, that you have the Scriptural doctrine in regard to Jesus Christ. Do you want another illustration? I will find it just where you constantly meet with it in life —the great scandal to man's proud reason. God ordains. Brethren,

can there be a God who does not? Can you have a God without a will? If that God be supreme, filling the solitude of His own vast eternity, before the morning stars sang together or ever the sons of God shouted for joy—before an angel was created or a single star thrown out into space—must not that God, through the whole period of His necessary being, have had a will, clear and explicit, through which His own mind and purpose should work themselves out? And yet, going along with it as its own sister, walking arm and arm with it all the way, checking, qualifying it, is the truth that God, having made man in His own image, endowing him with the attributes of thought, of affection and of will, man must, by the indestructible law of his being, move with perfect spontaneity upon his plane. I do not know exactly where these two meet; how they blend into each other, just as the colors of the rainbow blend and form that exquisite object which, whenever repeated, ravishes the gaze. But there are the facts—facts ascertained by us upon the testimony of God Himself, and confirmed by the testimony of man's own consciousness—that God wills, and that man, the agent, is unconstrained—the two factors evermore blending, so as to constitute every fact which occurs in the history of providence.

This dualism through all the Scriptures could be illustrated in turn by taking each one at every point in the circumference of doctrines. Now, you have an illustration of this in the passage upon which I am commenting. Paul, in order to describe the Christian, to whom this promise is made, describes him by a double reference: "All things work together for good to them that love God." This is the sum of practical religion on the human side of it; as you and I, standing upon the same plane, look at the Christian horizontally. Did not the Master, when He was upon the earth, sum up all obedience in this principle of love, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind?" This is the first commandment. "And thy neighbor as thyself." This is the second commandment; and upon these two commandments, which, in their last analysis, resolve into one generic principle of love, hang all the law and the prophets. When, therefore, you describe a man as he who loves God, you have given the most comprehensive description possible of him as we, viewing him from our point of observation, see him to be.

But if the question is raised, how does a man come to love God when of all the myriads of the race, the vast majority, even under the attractions which God is presenting to their view, refuse to love?—if the

question is urged upon us, how does it come to pass that some love God and some do not? the final answer is, the effectual calling of God's own grace and Spirit. Not only, then, to them that love God, but to them who are the called according to God's purpose. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." [Romans viii, 29:30.] Now, see, Paul puts the man to whom this promise is given at the edge of these distinct planes: the human plane where men regard the Christian from their point of view, the horizontal plane upon which we all stand together; and the vertical plane, coming down at right angles with the other, as God looks down from His heavens and from His throne upon the Christian. Exactly at the intersection of these two planes, the human and the divine, Paul plants the man to whom the promise is made. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Exactly where these two lights cross each other—the human light, as, standing upon a level with all the Christians upon the earth, we regard it; and the divine light, as it streams down from the throne above and strikes the believer; exactly at the point where our view and God's meet—just there Paul places the Christian, as the man to whom these promises are made.

The importance of observing this dual presentation of divine truth cannot perhaps be more happily enforced than by quoting one of the celebrated "Thoughts" of Blaise Pascal: "There are many," says he, "who err so much the more dangerously as they take a truth for the foundation of their error. Their fault consists not in following a falsehood, but in pursuing one truth to the exclusion of another." Clearly, he is right. Most of the errors which waste the world, arise not so much by a wilful departure from truth, as by neglecting the correspondencies and relations of truth; so that we easily slide into error by simply neglecting the limitations and qualifications that God places upon it. Whenever a man becomes modest and frank enough to look at truth on both its sides, and with those restrictions that God has placed upon it, he will be guarded against fanaticism on the one hand, and mysticism on the other.

Finally, you have the *confidence* with which Paul affirms the statement: "We *know* that all things work together for good." We know it as a *doctrine* plainly taught by the Holy Ghost in Scripture. We

know it as a *fact*, partially yet progressively developed in our own experience. We know it as an *inference*, necessarily drawn from the scheme of grace and all its provisions for the complete salvation of the sinner. And above all, we know it as a gracious *promise*, falling from the lips of our Father above under the seal of His own veracity, that all things, whether we can understand it or no, "work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

I might very properly arrest the discussion after this brief exposition of the points of the text. Having shown you the comprehensiveness of the promise, and the force of the adverb "together," and then the character of those to whom the promise is made, and finally the confidence with which the assurance is given, I might at this point arrest the flood of discourse. But let us for a moment press behind the exposition and raise the question why it is that "all things work together for good to them that love God." To this I have three answers to submit.

1. In the first place, *the entire administration of Providence is committed to Jesus Christ, to be wielded by Him in subordination to the scheme of grace.* He is not only our Priest to atone for us, to intercede for us, but He is equally our King. "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And Christ recognizes the delegated authority when, in giving the commission to His Apostles, which constitutes the very charter by which the church holds all her privileges and rights, He declares: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." [Matthew xxviii, 18:19.] In His dispute with the cavilling Jews, He expressly declares: "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." [John v, 22.] And then, to make it plain that it pertains to His office as the Mediator, He adds directly after: "And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the son of man." [Ibid., 27.] "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Why? "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." [Acts xvii, 30:31] The great truth, therefore, meets us, that the whole scheme of Providence, as well as the entire scheme of Grace, is now in the hands of the Mediator. He sits upon the Father's right hand, not only admin-

istering the grace of which He is the author, but also the law which He has magnified and honored by His obedience.

I wish that I had time to run this thought out in some of its wider applications. I feel pretty confident that I could show you, by reference to all the records of profane history, that the church of God is always found at the centre of human history, and that all the empires and kingdoms and states, however magnificent they may have been in their spheres, when they come to be viewed in relation to God's vast Providence, are but as satellites revolving around that immortal society which God calls His church—"which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." It is very remarkable that when you go back into the far past, you find Egypt and Persia and Babylonia having a history that is perfectly devoid of significance except as you view them in their relation to the ancient church of God; and what is still more striking, to this day only those ancient empires have been preserved in existence who, in their day, were kind to the church of God; and every kingdom and people in the far distant past which lifted up the hand of oppression and of wrong against the church of God, are at this day extinct. There is Egypt, in olden time the nurse of the church, taking that church in its feeble infancy and wrapping it in her broad bosom, until it grew to size and was able to take possession of the land which the Lord had given it in His covenant; and Egypt lives to this day, enfeebled, but still existing. Persia, which, having overthrown the Babylonian Empire, issued in the day of her power the decree by which the church was restored to her own land and to her own altars, lives to day even in the darkness and confusion that may surround her. But Babylon, which God raised up as an instrument of His discipline, and by which God's ancient people were afflicted and oppressed, leaves only her bricks and her towers to be excavated by modern antiquaries as the proof that she ever had an existence upon the earth. And so it will be through all modern history until the end of time: the church of God, immortal because she is the body of the Lord, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all"—she it is that walks among the stars, and empires and kingdoms simply revolve around her.

But, brethren, this is not particularly practical or profitable for us to dwell upon this morning. I merely throw it out sidewise for your reflection in private. If we, as God's children, could only take in the doctrine—as we take in the doctrine of atonement, the doctrine of Christ's priesthood, the doctrine of the cross—that all Providence is now, under this dispensation, administered by the Lord Jesus Christ, how it

would dissipate our fears and lift us above our despondency and gloom! What a scandal to the church of God that so many can trust God with the salvation of their soul, with the issues of the judgment day, with all the tremendous realities of the eternal world—who will go even through the narrow gateway of death without a pulse of fear, when, with their parting breath, they heave the soul up to God and to heaven, exclaiming, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"—who yet go through life with their heads bowed down like the bulrush, saying, "What shall I eat? and what shall I drink? and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" How monstrous! Able to trust God with eternity, and not able to trust Him with time! Able to trust God with the soul in the solemn hour of judgment, and yet not able to trust Him in the darkness of that night which gathers around us in our sorrow and bereavement! Able to trust God for the inheritance which shall be revealed to us at the last day, and yet not able to trust God for to-morrow's bread! Surely there is a solution for this wonderful contradiction in the experience of God's children; who are agitated and perplexed with the difficulties and fears of this brief life, when they can trust God with all the issues of the soul and with the tremendous realities of eternity. I think the solution is here. We take in the doctrine of Christ upon the cross as it respects the salvation of the soul. We take in the doctrine of His perfect salvation as it is our security in a dying hour. Our ears have been opened to hear His voice saying, "I will be surety to your souls for good when the world is wrapped in flames." But we have not taken in the correlative truth that He gives to each of us every day the bread we eat, spreads for us the couch upon which we sleep, puts over us the protecting hand of His love, and assures us if we trust in Him we shall never beg our bread. "I have been young, and now am old: yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

Oh! for the faith that will trust the King, as well as for the faith that will trust Jesus the Priest!—a faith that will not only make us kneel at His altar, where we are sprinkled with atoning blood, but which will enable us to kneel at the foot of His throne and place ourselves beneath the protection of His gracious and blessed sceptre! Ah! brethren, you have seen many a Christian die, and the last sound upon those lips ere they closed in death was the name of Jesus. I believe that the Holy Ghost, in that sacred hour, seals the name of the Redeemer upon the lips of the Christian as his last utterance, in order that it may be ready

upon those lips in the morning of the resurrection to have the pronunciation finished. We begin it as we go down into the darkness of the tomb; we expire before the precious name has been fully uttered, and there it remains upon the lips all through the long night of the grave. When the trumpet sounds and Christ shall come again, "without sin unto salvation;" when He, in the glory of His second advent, shall call from above, and we in our graves shall answer it, just as our eyes open upon the splendid spectacle of our Lord, the word of joyful recognition is already upon those lips to be pronounced, and we cry just as we did in death, "Even so, come Lord Jesus; come quicken me."

Now, cannot we trust Jesus Christ just in the same way about this world? Some of you are poor and getting poorer every day, going down the steep into the very depths of want. Does not Christ, who redeemed you, know it? Is it not under the ordination of your King that this, so bitter to you, happens? Is it not a part of His plan, which He intends to minister to your good, not only in this world, but still more in the world to come? Why can we not trust? Just because we have not recognized the doctrine of Christ's headship and kingship, and do not perceive His relation to Providence as we perceive His relation to Grace. All things must work together for good to them that love God, because the entire administration of Providence is now in the hands of our blessed Redeemer. See Him there upon the cross! Hear His prayer ere He closes His lips in death, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." As your eye fixes its gaze upon Him who hangs there upon the tree, can you not trust Him for all the remaining days of your earthly pilgrimago until, with His own hand, at the last, He shall wipe the tears from your eyes, and, as the Great Shepherd, will lead you into green pastures and beside the living fountains of waters above?

2. Again, all things must work together for good to the Christian, *because this life is a life of discipline*, which infers that it will end at last in bliss. That is the difference between discipline and punishment. When the law takes the condemned criminal and hangs him upon the gibbet, that is not discipline—it is retribution. But when the father in his closet smites his child for its fault, it is not retribution, but it is chastisement. In the one it is the penalty of the law vindicating the majesty of government; and in the other case it is paternal love, directed by paternal wisdom, that is training that child for usefulness and happiness in life. Now, all the sorrows which God's children experience on earth constitute the discipline through which they are prepared for another

world; and just because it is disciplinary, it must end at last in that very good which the text declares—"all things work together for good to them that love God."

3. In the third and last place, the promise of the text must hold true, just *because the believer is necessary to Christ as His reward.* There are moments of deep humility when, as we look within ourselves and see our unworthiness, we are covered with shame, and say that we are less than the least of all God's mercies. Brethren, am I dealing in the language of exaggeration when I say that you and I sometimes roll in the dust when God, by His Spirit, is carrying us through our private Christian exercises, and feel that we are just as worthless as a grain of sand? We fold our hands upon our bosom and are amazed that we live; that beings so worthless should have God's thought extended to us, and God's care extended over us even for a single day. Yet, according to the Scriptures, we have a value in the estimation of Christ which is beyond all price. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." [John xvii, 24.] These redeemed from death and from the curse are to shine forever as stars in the Redeemer's diadem; and through all the eternity to come, He, the Mediator, standing before the throne of His Father as the head of His ransomed church, will not consent to spare the poorest jewel from His crown. Hence, because we are His jewels, dug by His own hand from the quarry and polished by all the discipline through which He has passed us, after we have been redeemed and after we have been sanctified, Christ Jesus, even amidst the glories of heaven, will not dispense with the very least of us.

So, whatever be the pressure under which God puts us in His Providence on earth, it is not that we shall be altogether ground up in His mill, but only that we shall be made to shine with a greater lustre when we appear among the elder sons of God. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

My Christian brethren, if this exposition which I have sought to make this morning, has impressed you at all, let me infer from it *that it is our duty and privilege carefully to study the dealings of God with us* ever since our birth; for, according to the quaint language of an old divine, "He who studies Providences will have Providences to study." With the eye fixed upon the way by which God has led us, we shall find a thousand instances in which that hand has been extended to us in love. It

is recorded of Philip Doddridge that, in a dream at night, he imagined himself in eternity; and passing into a great temple and into a spacious hall within it, he saw a small table in the centre of the room, and upon it a cup and a plate with a bunch of grapes. As his eye ranged around the walls of the room, he discovered that they were covered with strange lines and characters which he could not understand; and whilst he was in his first wonder, a shining one came into the room, and pressed the grapes into the cup and gave him to drink. He again scanned the tracery upon the walls, and lo! it was a perfect map of his own life, of all that had ever happened to him from his birth until his death, in all their connections and relations; and so he came to see that many grievous disappointments, which, when they occurred, almost broke his heart, had been sent by God in infinite love to protect him from dangers into which he would otherwise have fallen; and thus his whole life was expounded to him. I suppose it was but the reproduction of the holy man's waking thoughts in the dream of the night. My brethren, after our first surprise, when we have been first filled with the sight of all the glory of that upper kingdom, perhaps the next lesson to which we may be set will be the study of our own personal history, to learn the truth of this promise, that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

We may not always be able here to tell exactly how. And yet even that can be partially seen. When God gives us prosperity, sometimes he gives an abounding grace with it that keeps it from becoming a snare. Sometimes, in our largest prosperity and joy, there is such a sanctifying virtue with it as to make us enjoy God and love Him the more in all that earthly portion; and so the goodness of God is only made an experience which leads us nearer and nearer to Him. But even with those who are the most favored, there is a cross in every man's lot, a thorn in every man's flesh, like Paul; and, like Paul, we may thrice pray that God may remove that thorn from us, and, like him, we must be satisfied with the promise which comes in the answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Boston beautifully puts it when he says there was a want even in Paradise; for as our first parents looked upon all the goodly trees of the garden, laden with their precious fruit, there was one in the midst of the garden that was forbidden. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." [Genesis ii, 16:17.] And then the good man adds, that this tree, interdicted to our first parents in the Garden of Eden,

was the finger of all the creatures pointing even Adam, in his original holiness, from the earth to heaven, saying to him, "This is not your rest."

When adversity comes, we may so clearly see that it is from the hand of God; in its timeliness, coming at the right juncture; in its exact suitableness to our own temperament and character and condition; so that, however hard may be the suffering, we are able to say with perfect honesty, "Even so, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight: Not my will, but thine be done." Study God's Providences, and you shall see God in the bosom of those Providences; and when you see Him, it will be "God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

When you make that discovery you will be prepared, in the next place, to be perfectly content and happy in your lot, whatever that lot may be. Yes, we are not even philosophers, not to say Christians, until we have learned the great secret that a man's happiness is to be found in himself, in the adjustment of his own nature to his duties and towards God. It is not wealth, it is not power, it is not the blandishments of pleasure, but it is a good conscience—a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man—a conscience that can look all the world in the face with an honest desire to bless it—a conscience that can look fearlessly up to God's throne through the power of the Redeemer's righteousness, and not quail even before its terrors. It is this that makes a man happy in life, and there may be as much happiness in the hovel as in the palace. There is as much happiness even in sorrow, when the soul is in God's hand, as there is in our times of highest prosperity and joy. If I should be sent forth to search for those who are truly happy upon this earth, I should seek them amongst the bruised. I should go to those who have been under the discipline of God. I should seek for them in their secret places, when, under the pressure of their woe, they have wept tears of great suffering, and yet of honest submission to the will of their Father above. Let us, then, take our lot, whatever it be, and find good in it—extract from it the sweetness which God has put in it, and let it educate us for the compensating rest that is to be ours hereafter.

And now what shall I say to those who are unconverted and impenitent in this assembly? Why only this: that godliness hath the promise of this life no less than of that which is to come; and I desire that you shall take part with us in the peace which God sheds down upon the

soul here, as well as in the inheritance which God will make the saints reward hereafter. Ah! my hearer, if there were no judgment and no heaven and no hell; if we were to live interminably on in this world, I should say it is your loss, if you are not able to take Christ's promise and fold it to your heart in your trouble and in your joy, and go with your songs of gratitude to Him that lifts His smile upon you. If you desire to know the secret of a true happiness long before you are called to die, give your soul to Christ and be His by a covenant bond which shall never be broken nor forgotten.

XVI.

RECONCILIATION WITH GOD THROUGH CHRIST JESUS.*

II CORINTHIANS v, 19:—"*To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.*"

The Apostle gives here a beautiful definition of the Gospel, "the ministry of reconciliation." The very term implies the existence of previous friendship, which has been interrupted in its course. It is the renewal of former intimacy between estranged friends. How sweet was the fellowship between God and our first parents in the garden of Eden, in the days of their innocence! Their happy spirits not only communed with God in the contemplation of His works; but He appeared in visible form and conversed with them face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend. But after the fall, how great the estrangement! Henceforth, "the carnal mind" became "enmity against God:" and the guilty pair sought to flee from His presence, and to hide themselves in the recesses of the garden. God, too, must needs be angry with the sinner. All the holiness of His nature must lift itself in opposition to the sinfulness of the transgressor. Man, at once a rebel and an outlaw, wanders forth an exile from the presence and the favor of God.

The Gospel proposes now to bring these estranged parties together, and to set them at one again. It restores, on the one hand, that which man had taken away from the honor of the divine law; and, on the other, it renders forgiving love perfectly consistent with the inflexible justice of God: as it is expressed in the eighty-fifth Psalm, "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other; truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven."

*Preached on the 22d of March, 1857, at the ordination and installation of Rev. Dr. Henry M. Smith, as Pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church, in New Orleans, La.

Regarding now the position of these two parties, let us notice the difficulties in the way of reconciliation. On the part of the sinner, these difficulties are twofold: in his *actual character*, and in his *legal relations*. As to the first, he is absolutely devoid of any desire to be reconciled. If the solemn declaration of Paul be true—"The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"—then there can be no self-origination of the desire for reconciliation. The instant the heart desires to be restored to divine favor, it ceases to be any longer enmity against God Until, then, some influence from above is brought to bear upon the sinner, he is incapable of a single desire after God and holiness. This forms the first barrier in the way of reconciliation. But there is another. Even though the sinner, like Esau, should search even with tears for a place of repentance on account of his apostacy, neither his remorse nor his tears can restore him to the favor which he has lost. As far as in him lay, he has violated the integrity of the divine government, he has attempted a breach upon the divine supremacy, he has openly impeached the truth and justice of the holy law. His apostacy contains in itself the elements of every crime which can be committed against the power of God, the majesty of government and the holiness of law. He stands convicted both of rebellion and of treason. The whole integrity of Jehovah, as the moral ruler of the universe, is involved in His prosecution of the sinner. His obligations to Himself and to His empire require Him to pronounce the sentence of attainder and banishment: the stability of His throne and the holiness of His nature unite in this demand.

It is transparently clear that whilst this decree is registered against us, no grief and no remorse can buy back the lost inheritance. We may, like Job, afflict our souls and sit down among the ashes—it is wholly ineffectual to remove the sentence pronounced by the majesty of the violated law. Should God, by an act of sovereignty, cancel these legal obstructions, we should still be barred from His kingdom by that sin which has now become an element of our very being. The will of man no longer blends in delightful harmony with the will of God; the darkened mind no longer rises to the contemplation of God; the crippled affections no longer soar upon the wing to rejoice in the perfections of Jehovah. There is that in man's own nature which, independent of every other obstacle, would exclude him from that heaven into which nothing can enter that defileth or that maketh a lie. Suppose, then, an impossibility; that in the bosom of absolute enmity a sincere desire after reconciliation with God can be self-originated. Suppose another

impossibility; that God shall so far disregard His own law as to reverse the decree which it pronounces against the transgressor: and place him with his unchanged heart amidst the shining Seraphim, next to the throne of God—and what is gained? What—except that by mutual repulsion the sinner will be thrown off from his station; nor shall the frightful speed with which he gravitates to his own place be arrested, until he shall reach the centre of the burning gulf.

Neither of these difficulties can be supposed to exist on the part of God. Whilst, from His necessary holiness, He cannot but feel the intensest hatred to the *sin*, He may yet regard with infinite compassion the *person* of His poor and erring creature. Again: as God pronounced the decree of banishment, He alone has authority to reverse it; and as He alone had power to make man at the first, He alone is able to create him anew. But there is one difficulty in the way of reconciliation, on God's part, which we might pronounce insurmountable if we did not know it had been overcome: it consists in *bringing His holiness into contact at all with man's sinfulness*. It is hard for us antecedently to conceive how God shall even make the offer of reconciliation, without seeming to sustain man in his rebellion, and thus tarnish His own glory. If, on the one hand, He shall suspend this reconciliation upon any condition which the sinner is able to fulfil, does he not thereby erect him into an independent party and enter into compact with sin? If, on the other hand, He proposes an impossible condition, what approach has been made towards a healing of the breach? Nay, it is hard to conceive how God can so much as speak to the sinner, except to pronounce his doom. The tender of mercy to him, while his heart seeks not to be reconciled, appears a concession, on the part of God, either as to the injustice or the severity of His sentence. From our point of view, the chief difficulties are found in the initiation of any scheme of grace which shall not present the Divine Ruler as making a treaty with His attainted subjects. You perceive the dilemma. Supposing the bosom of God to be filled with compassion for guilty man, and that His infinite wisdom has framed an offer of reconciliation—the problem is to bring His holiness into such contact with man's sinfulness as to make that offer known. Now observe the stupendous scheme unfolded in the text, by which all these difficulties—on the one side and on the other—are obviated: "God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

As we have already seen, God and man stand apart, upon the opposite poles of infinite holiness and of utter sinfulness. Not only so, but they

are kept asunder by a mutually repelling power. There is in holiness an extruding force, by which sin is driven back from any approach; and there is in sin a withdrawing instinct, which causes it to recede further and further from God: and by the operation of both, the distance widens between the two to the furthest extreme. The question is, how may they be approximated? This is the problem resolved in the text; and by a method so simple that it may almost be represented through a diagram. It consists in the appointment of a third party, intermediate between the two, in whose person and by whose work they are brought together. God was in Christ; here is the opening of the mystery. In the apostacy of man, when the legions of hell triumphed and all the hosts of heaven stood amazed and silent, a voice was heard in the courts above, saying, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom:" and the sons of God shouted for joy, and tuned their harps to the song of redemption. In "the fulness of time," there stepped forth from the shining throng one like to the Son of God. It was the eternal Son who left the bosom of the Father, the glory of heaven and the worship of angels: and as He leaped from His throne and sped to earth, He exclaimed, "Lo, I come—in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." God was in Christ. Yes, this is the plan. "Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth," "The word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us!" God's uncreated Son, who shared with Him in His equal glory, descends to earth—and assumes, in mysterious conjunction with His divine person, a true human nature—and "being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Here then in the constitution of the Mediator's person we have an emblem of the reconciliation which He makes. Through the incarnation, God passes over half the distance which separates Him from man; and, by the work of this incarnate Redeemer, man is raised up from the pit, and is mystically united with Him. God is in Christ, and now the sinner is in Christ; and so the two, almost without a figure, are brought together and are reconciled forever. But it will be necessary to become a little more minute in our exposition of this glorious reconciliation and the methods of its accomplishment.

I. *In Christ is found an agent, with whom a holy God may consistently treat in man's behalf.* The difficulty, to which this proposition points, has been already presented: God cannot directly propose a plan of mercy to the sinner as such, without compromising His own dignity and truth. See how precisely this is met in the text. It is not God absolute, sitting upon His throne and administering His law, who offers

reconciliation directly to His subjects bristling in rebellion before Him. But it is God in Christ—God incarnate, "found in fashion as a man." You will perceive that the Lord Jesus Christ, by the union of the divine and human natures in His mediatorial person, is equally related to both the estranged parties. By the possession of a divine nature, He is fully competent to the heavy responsibilities which He assumes; and by the possession of human nature, He acquires the right to undertake for man and on His behalf to enter into treaty with God. The plan of reconciliation may then be drawn out, in its details, somewhat thus: the three Persons of the Godhead, equally concurring in the project of mercy, distribute among themselves the several parts of the scheme. The Father, the first Person, assumes to represent the Godhead—to hold the claims of the divine law—to execute its penalty upon the sinner or upon his substitute—and to justify and to reward the righteous. The Son, the second Person, undertakes to represent the sinner—to bear the penalty of the law in behalf of all whom the Father should give to Him—and to provide a righteousness for their complete justification. To the Holy Spirit, the third Person, is assigned the application of this mercy, in the saving experience of it, to all who were thus redeemed by Christ.

In this scheme the eternal Son undertakes to become man's representative. To this end, the Father enters into obligation to give Him, as His seed, all those of this lost race whom He will pledge Himself to redeem. He promises moreover to endue Him as Mediator with full grace and power to execute this trust. He pledges Himself to justify and accept all whom the Son shall redeem; and as the reward of His voluntary humiliation, to crown Him King and Head of this ransomed seed forever. The Son, on His part, pledges Himself to purchase these at His own expense, to remove the penalty of the broken law which they have incurred, and to present them before the Father's throne "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish." Note now the manner in which these tremendous pledges are fulfilled. "Behold the mystery of Godliness!" At the appointed time, He strips Himself of His eternal glory, He lays aside the garments of praise, He unwraps His majesty and puts it by, He unclothes Himself of light: amidst the shouts of angels He hastens to earth to dwell among men—"Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Born mysteriously of a

virgin, He became a true and real man; and therefore as fully able to become the representative of man as was Adam, the first father of the race.

At the same moment in which the Son of God took upon Him the seed of Abraham, He came also into a *federal* relation. He had been appointed, in the ancient contract, a trustee for man; and to qualify Him for this trust, a body was prepared Him. As soon as He entered it, He became at once the Head and Representative of all whom the Father had given Him, and assumed for them the trusteeship to which He had been appointed. The reason of all this is sufficiently obvious. An infinitely holy God can make no overtures to guilty man; and to obviate this difficulty in the way of reconciliation, He appoints His Son to act as the agent for man. He therefore unites Him to the race by a common human nature, and connects Him with a portion of the same by an invisible though real covenant relation. He constitutes Christ the Head of all these, and enters into treaty with Him on their behalf. All the offers of mercy, all the promises of grace, are made to Christ in man's behalf—"to Abraham and his seed were the promises made; he saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." It is important to notice that not one of these promises is made immediately to the sinner, as such. They are all given, in the first instance, to Christ Jesus who represents the sinner, and with whom alone the Father deals in all these solemn transactions of grace. He alone, as Head of the Church and King of Saints, makes them over to us, and employs His ministers to preach these glad tidings of great joy to all the world. By this appointment of Jesus Christ, who is God and man united in one person, an agent appears with whom God may honorably and consistently treat in reference to man's recovery from ruin: God is in Christ, "reconciling the world unto himself."

II. *Christ Jesus, in His mediatorial person as the God-man, executes the terms of reconciliation.* The way being opened now for making known the offer of reconciliation, we must next inquire into the terms upon which it is proposed. As man has forfeited all claims upon the divine favor, it is plain that God may impose whatever conditions are pleasing to Him. There are however two which, from the nature of the case, must be insisted upon. The sinner must render satisfaction to the legal penalty which he has incurred, and he must present before God the perfect obedience which the law originally claimed. The necessity of these two requisitions may be demonstrated from the essential attributes of Jehovah. If He be infinitely *holy*, then He cannot be

reconciled to sin. But any defect of obedience is sin; unless therefore man is possessed of an obedience that is perfect, God can hold no communion with him. If God be *truthful*, He cannot forego the sanctions of His own law, which exactly state the measure of the creature's obligations, and nothing more. Until this penalty is met, the divine veracity is at stake—rendering this one of the necessary conditions of reconciliation. If God be *supreme*, He cannot tolerate the least sin, which is but rebellion against His rightful authority. Unless, then, God shall abdicate His sovereignty, the sinner cannot be restored to favor until the law shall triumph in the assertion of its jurisdiction. If God be *immutable*, He cannot relax in His demands upon the creature. In whatever form they were originally expressed, they must still be enforced. Should they be remitted by the slightest imaginable difference, His immutability is destroyed, and with it the stability of His throne. In a word, whatever may be the basis of reconciliation, there can be no concession of God's inalienable rights; satisfaction must be rendered alike to the penalty and to the precept of His perfect and holy law.

How vain will it be to come to man with terms of reconciliation such as these! How can the poor and guilty sinner perform one act of obedience? and how can he hope to satisfy the curse of that law which he has broken? In our despair, let us turn again to the text—"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." This reconciliation is not accomplished by the abortive attempt of the sinner to fulfil conditions which are to him impossible; but is achieved by the Lord Jesus Christ, who executes these identical terms. Being made flesh, and constituted the covenant head of His people, He assumes their exact place under the law: "In the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law." Adam was not more truly the head and representative of his seed under the Covenant of Works, than is the Lord Jesus the head of His seed under the Covenant of Grace. As, in the one case, the whole represented race fell in the transgression of Adam; so, in the second case, is the represented seed of Christ restored by His obedience. It is the explicit testimony of the Apostle that, "as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." How completely, then, is this difficulty in the way of reconciliation removed by the work of Christ? True, the sinner is incompetent to fulfil the conditions prescribed: but Christ appears on his behalf, and pledges Himself to fulfil them to the letter. He dies, and thus satisfies

the penalty: He fulfils all righteousness, and thus provides a perfect obedience for his justification. All this Christ did in His public and official relations, as the Head and Representative of His chosen seed.

He alone could fulfil these conditions. Allow me to show briefly how the union of the two natures in the person of Christ was necessary to the completion of this work. If Christ had not been truly man, He could never have represented man—this consanguinity was indispensable to that function. If Christ had not been truly man, He could not have been made under the law; and the value of His work consists in the fact that He magnified the law and made it honorable. If He had not been truly man, He would have had no life to offer for sin, no body to be sacrificed as a victim—and there could have been no satisfaction rendered to justice. If He had not been truly man, He would have possessed no right of redemption; otherwise, when He offered Himself, God had said, "Who hath required this at your hand?" If He had not been truly man, there could have been no connexion betwixt Himself and His redeemed people, whereby the blessings of eternal life might pass into their possession. In fine, by virtue of His man-hood Christ acquired the right of redemption, the power of trusteeship and representation, the capacity for legal obedience, the power of atonement, and became the bond of connexion between the ransomed sinner and the infinitely holy God.

On the other hand, the divine nature was equally essential to this mediatorial trust. If Christ had not been God, He had possessed no right over His own life to lay it down for the world. If He were not truly God, He had no power to take up that life after He had laid it down—He had been without ability to restore Himself from death and the grave. If He were not God, His atonement would not have an infinite value, through which sin might be forgiven and eternal torments be remitted. If He were not God, He had been unable to sustain the infinite wrath of the Father, which presses the sinner down to hell. If He were not God, He could not be crowned the Supreme King over the Church, ruling in the hearts of His saints, and dashing His enemies in pieces like a potter's vessel. If He were not God, omnipresence and omniscience wanting, He could not be the interceding Priest in heaven to present the wants and desires of His people, and to sue out the blessings they require. But, being God and man in one person, He is able, through the one, to become the head, the representative, the trustee, the surety, the vicarious sacrifice, the justifying righteousness, and the uniting point of all His people: and, through the other, the Lord of life

and death, the conqueror of Satan, the destroyer of the grave, the meritorious propitiation, the ascending and reigning King, and the interceding Priest, to all who put their trust in Him. Thus is He endued with right, as man, to execute for man the terms of reconciliation; and thus, as God, is He possessed of the requisite power: and so it is, "God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."

III. *As the result of Christ's work, the sinner is renewed and sanctified, and so fitted for reconciliation with God.* We have already seen that, if every legal obstruction were removed, there remains a difficulty in the sinner's actual character. God cannot be reconciled to sin, and how shall man become holy? Plainly, as there is in the sinful heart no *self-restoring*, so there can be no *self-regenerating*, power. Enmity cannot reconvert itself into love, nor evolve love out of itself. This difficulty must be removed from without, by an external divine agency. Let us see how it is accomplished. The Lord Jesus redeems the sinner with His own blood upon the cross. He then, as Mediator, intercedes for him at the Father's throne—pleading His own right of purchase, and the stipulations of the eternal covenant in which this sinner was given Him as His seed. He presses the merit of His atoning work, and claims this purchased soul as His own. The plea prevails; and He receives the sanction of the Father, under the seal of the law which He administers, to call upon the Holy Ghost, the third Person in the adorable Trinity, whose official function it is to apply this purchased grace to the sinner himself. As Mediatorial King, Christ sends forth this Divine Spirit, under the joint seal of the Father and the Son, to carry out the work of redemption in its actual application to the souls of all the ransomed seed. This Holy Spirit quickens these who are "dead in trespasses and sins," and communicates in the new birth the principle of spiritual life. He reveals Christ as the only and all-sufficient Savior, and implants the faith by which that Savior is personally received. In the soul thus renewed the Holy Ghost continues to dwell, and carries forward to the end the gracious work of sanctification. Thus by the work of Christ, through the agency of the Holy Ghost, the difficulty is cancelled as to the sinner's unfitness to enjoy the reconciliation which has been effected. We are born again, created anew in the image of God, restored to holiness by progressive sanctification, which is made complete at last in our translation to heaven. Thus the reconciliation is accomplished in fact, as well as in law, and we are fitted for communion with God in His glory forever.

It is obviously impossible, in a single discourse, to go into the details

of what is done by Christ or by the Spirit in this work of reconciliation. My object has been, rather, by certain broad strokes of the pencil, to sketch the rude outlines of the reconciliation itself, just as it lies in the terms of the text. But this would be incomplete without dwelling a little upon the descriptive clause, "*not imputing their trespasses unto them*." It is sin alone that separates man from God. "Your iniquities," says Isaiah, "have separated between you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." As long as sin remains upon us, God cannot be reconciled: and the text declares that He removes the difficulty by "not imputing these trespasses" to us. The same truth is expressed elsewhere in the Scriptures; that when God becomes reconciled, He no longer charges our transgressions upon us, does not lay them to our account, nor hold us obnoxious to punishment for them. Thus the Psalmist exclaims, "If Thou, Lord, shouldst *mark* iniquities, who should stand?" So again, when he would represent God as punishing sin, he says, "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance." And again, forgiveness is thus presented: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is *covered*—blessed is the man to whom the Lord *imputeth not iniquity*." In like manner the prophet Jeremiah declares, "In those days the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." The prophet Micah also testifies, "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

But here an interesting inquiry comes up. If these sins are not charged upon the sinner to whom they properly belong, what becomes of them? Does God, by an act of general indemnity, blot them out forever? If so, where is the need of all this work of Christ in representing the sinner and dying for him? Why must it be "God in Christ" who reconciles by "not imputing trespasses?" It is plain that, if not charged to the sinner, they must be charged to some other being who has become responsible for them. That being is Christ, who has undertaken to be the sinner's substitute: and the punishment, which the one deserves, has been borne by the other. This tallies precisely with the testimony of Scripture elsewhere: "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all;" "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed;" "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." The same truth was taught in the typical rite of the Mosaic economy; when

it was directed that "Aaron should lay both his hands upon the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat; and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness; and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited." Can there be a more striking emblem of the imputation to the Lord Jesus Christ of all the sins of the true Israel?

But this imputation of our sins to Christ draws after it, by necessary consequence, the imputation of His righteousness to us. I have articulately stated that the sinner must present to God, for his justification, a perfect obedience. He has none of his own: and now in this mighty commercial transaction of grace, he exchanges his sins, which are laid upon Christ, for that glorious righteousness of his surety which is reckoned to him—and thus he stands accepted in the presence of God and the law. This double imputation, of sin to Christ and of righteousness to the believer, results from the federal relation which Christ sustains to His people. He is their Trustee and Head and Surety. All that He does, He does in this official capacity; He does it for them and in their stead. If He bear sin, it is for them—that it may no more be charged to their account. If He fulfil all righteousness, it is for them—that it may be imputed to them for their justification.

It is apparent, then, how this reconciliation is effected in Christ and through Him. He is the agent with whom God treats on man's behalf. He executes the conditions on which it rests. As their substitute under the law, their sins are laid upon Him; and the fire from heaven, which consumes the sacrifice upon the altar, consumes the sins which are laid upon it for expiation. Through His righteousness, which is accounted theirs in law, they stand justified forever, and are counted righteous even as He is righteous. The entire problem is solved when God and the sinner are brought together in the person of Jesus Christ. As to the first, God is in Christ, through the incarnation of His son. It is only necessary to bring up the sinner from the pit into which he is fallen and unite him to Christ, and the reconciliation is perfect. As to this, we know that it is done by the Spirit, through faith. With the new life, faith and repentance spring forth as its necessary manifestations. As the Holy Spirit draws, the sinner comes and puts his whole trust in the Redeemer. As soon as he believes, the union is complete with Christ, and he enters upon the possession of all the benefits which were purchased with His blood. The sinner is in Christ—and God is in Christ—and the two are together. Glorious reconciliation!

My brother, to you is "the ministry of this reconciliation" now to be formally committed. We meet, this afternoon, as a court of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the solemnity of ordination, to lay upon you this "gift." When we shall extend to you the right hand of fellowship, it is that you may "take part with us in this ministry of reconciliation." As we engage in these consecrating acts, so full of perilous responsibility to yourself, it may be well for us all to remember that the first qualification for this amazing trust is that we are ourselves reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. It is just in this way the Apostle introduces the whole subject to our thought: "Who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." Not until we have felt ourselves "the peace of God which passeth understanding," are we authorized to proclaim it to others. Not until we ourselves have felt the power of that blood which "cleanseth from all sin," can we offer the sprinkling of it upon the unclean hearts around us. Not until we ourselves have entered into the joy of fellowship with God, can we open the folds of His great bosom that others may lie in His sweet embrace. But if we know the bliss of this reconciliation, in contrast with the torture of former estrangement from God, we shall have the tongue of love, which will be the tongue of fire, to speak the joys we would gladly pour into other hearts besides our own.

Then too "we are ambassadors for Christ." We have no lessons to give in human philosophy, but simply to tell the story of the cross: that "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit, is our message to be delivered. We bring no "sign" to the Jew, no "wisdom" to the Greek; but "to Jew and Greek, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." This is the beginning and the end of our calling—as living witnesses of the truth and grace of God in its experimental form, like the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan, to point the finger to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

We are to engage in this ministry of reconciliation with all the tenderness of an earnest beseeching. The Apostle throws into it the weight of a double emphasis: "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be you reconciled unto God." Can we take in both the propositions? the vehemence and majesty with which God would plead, and the melting tenderness with which Christ would entreat? and yet the one and the other must be embalmed in our speech.

Oh! who is sufficient for these things! May the Holy Spirit pour "grace into our lips," and make them familiar with the accents of a passionate entreaty! It is not with cold, didactic exposition of the mere text of truth, nor with the pedantry of human learning, nor with the airy speculations of subtle philosophy, that we are to break through the enchantments of earth and win the wanderers back to God. This requires all the ardor of a seraph's glow, the eloquence that springs from communion with the holy and warmed with the benevolence of redeeming love itself. As though God did beseech men by us—to pray them in Christ's stead—nothing short of this will fill the measure of our responsibility, or win the souls who shall be "our crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming." There is no higher honor in the gift of God than to take part in this ministry of reconciliation. Even the responsibilities of it are sweet; for they end at last in placing the crown of dominion and of glory upon the head of our King and Lord, forever and ever.

XVII.

THE OTHER COMFORTER.

ST. JOHN xiv, 16:—"*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.*"

The last Paschal lamb had been slain. The shadow upon the Hebrew dial marked the hour when the types and symbols of the old economy should be withdrawn; just as the shadows are lost in the substance when the sun is in the zenith. In that upper chamber, before the disciples, lay the two distinctive sacraments of the two dispensations, the prefiguring Passover and the memorial Eucharist. Judaism was slowly breathing out its life, soon to experience a resurrection in a new and more spiritual economy. Slowly and sadly the Master spoke of His departure, in which all this was involved: "A little while, and ye shall not see see me; and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father." "But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?" "I go to prepare a place for you: and, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." As He spake these words the sorrow that comes only from the tomb was slowly stealing over their hearts. But despair must not be suffered to throw its dark pall over those by whom an apostate world was soon to be evangelized: and our Lord proceeds to comfort them in that memorable discourse recorded in these chapters of John's gospel. The topic upon which He mainly insists is the coming of the Comforter, which was conditioned upon His own departure. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you—but if I depart, I will send him unto you." [St. John xvi, 7.] "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"—and this enigmatical utterance the Evangelist immediately explains as referring to the Holy Ghost—"but

this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." [St. John vii, 37-39.]

I might very properly insist upon the evidence, furnished in all this language, of the personality of the Holy Spirit. He is described here, not as a mere influence going out from God, accomplishing this or that purpose—nor yet as an attribute immanent in the divine character, working itself out in one or another form of manifestation: but He is represented as an agent, having personal functions to fulfil. As a person, too, He is clearly distinguished from the Father by whom He is sent—and from the Son, in whose name He comes: "But the Comforter, whom the Father shall send in my name, he shall teach you all things." [St. John xiv, 26.] Contenting myself, however, with only an allusion to this important topic, it is more necessary to my present purpose to understand the precise import of the word Comforter in this connexion. For if He be *another* Comforter, different from Christ himself, we must find a meaning for the word which shall be common to the two. Turning, then, to the Scriptures, we discover but one other passage in which this particular term is employed; and there, happily for us, it is applied to the work of Christ: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." As these two are the only places in the New Testament where this word, Paraclete, occurs, we are driven back upon its etymology for its signification. It means, simply, one called in from without, to stand by us with his counsel and aid. For example: you are embarrassed in your worldly business and involved in legal complications—you call in a counsellor learned in the law, who pleads your cause before the tribunals of justice; that advocate is, in the discharge of his office, your Paraclete or Comforter. Again: you are laid upon a bed of serious illness, and draw apparently near to death—you call in a skilful physician, who probes your disease; until, by God's blessing upon his treatment, you are restored to perfect health: that physician is, in his functions, another comforter. So, here, Christ is the one Paraclete, Advocate, or Comforter—translate it as you will—and the Holy Ghost is the other—each in the discharge of their respective functions. The word Comforter is as good an equivalent for the original as any in our language, and it is hallowed by long and precious association. But the meaning must be extended a little beyond its technical and restricted sense, to admit this two-fold application to the Savior and to the Spirit.

The hinge upon which this discourse will turn is the word "other"

in the text: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you *another* Comforter." My object will be to show in what relations the work of the Holy Ghost stands to the work of Christ, by which He becomes that *other* Comforter—and in consequence of which He becomes the Vicar of Christ, to complete the work which He, the Savior, has begun. I cannot do this better than by taking up the *three-fold office of Christ as the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church*—in each of which the agency of the Spirit is the complement of that of Christ himself.

I. THE PROPHETICAL OFFICE. All our certain and accurate knowledge of God comes by immediate revelation. That God certainly is, a personal being, with intelligence and will—that He is not a mere force existing somewhere in the universe, nor yet the sum of all the forces we observe in nature: what are His attributes, the enumeration and aggregation of which give us the only conception we can form of His character: what are the principles of His government over His intelligent creatures, in all the worlds which they inhabit: in what definite personal relations He stands to us, involving the whole of duty here and the whole of destiny hereafter:—these truths are in their nature transcendental, and lie wholly without the orbit in which our natural reason moves. They are not implicitly contained in human consciousness, so as to be evolved by necessary deduction; nor are they communicated by any oracles of nature, whose testimonies may be inductively gathered and compared. They are original thoughts in the divine mind, and can only be known as they are let down from His mind into ours.

Without dwelling, however, upon this necessity of revelation, which, probably, you will all readily admit, I wish you to observe that this work of revelation is uniformly ascribed, in Scripture, to the Son. "All things," says Christ, "are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." [Matthew xi, 27.] "No man," says John, "hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." [St. John i, 18.] These testimonies are explicit. God, in the person of the Father, is always the incomprehensible and the unknown. It belongs to the Son, whose personal distinction consists in being immediately *from* the Father as His only begotten, to reveal the Godhead. On this is really founded the office of the Son as the Creator—the idea of revelation being primary, and underlying all creative acts. For what is the universe but one vast *word* by which God makes Himself known? "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the

world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." [Romans i, 20.] Hence it was the Son, in His office of Revealer, who walked with Adam in the garden of Eden, in the cool of the day. It was the Son who delivered the law from Mount Sinai, and talked face to face with Moses, from the bosom of the cloud. It was this Revealer who appeared in all those supernatural manifestations to the ancient Patriarchs. It was He who stood as the head of the entire Prophetical dispensation, and spoke through Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea and Malachi. It was in the discharge of the same function that Christ fulfilled His personal ministry upon earth—sent forth the Apostles—and now continues the living ministry, which shall expound the written word. As the Revealer, He lifts up those transcendental truths out of the abysses of the Godhead, and makes them known to us by an authoritative communication.

Now, mark! When this revelation comes to crystallize in human speech, and is reduced to permanent record, just there is introduced the agency of the Holy Ghost in connexion with the Prophetical office of Christ. His mysterious power is exerted upon the minds of prophets and apostles, in order that they may safely conceive in thought and accurately represent in language all that the Revealer makes known. It is not my purpose to discuss here the general subject of inspiration, nor even to suggest the different theories upon which it has been attempted to explain it. Contenting myself with the simple fact that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God"—and with the further fact that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"—I wish you to perceive how exactly inspiration by the Holy Spirit is correlated with revelation by the Son. Both are constituent factors in making up the Bible as an authoritative and infallible rule for human guidance. The one supplies the *divine* element, whilst the other supplies the *human*—both of which are alike indispensable in the record. The revelation brings out from the abyss in God, where they are hidden, the truths to be communicated; inspiration clothes them with the forms of human thought and expression, through which they are made intelligible. A divine authority is thereby secured not only to the truth revealed, but to the language and form in which that revealed truth is conveyed to our human apprehension. Such is the relation which the Holy Spirit sustains to Christ as the PROPHET of the Church; from whom He is discriminated, in His separate office, as the *other* Comforter.

This is not all. The Holy Ghost *illuminates* the word which first He inspired. You remember the glory which invested the person of our

Lord upon the mount of Transfiguration—and the glory which smote Saul of Tarsus to the earth, when Christ appeared to him on the way to Damascus. Well, it is the office of the Spirit to reveal Christ in the Word, "bringing all things to our remembrance whatsoever he has said unto us." [St. John xiv, 26.] And He does this by lighting up the Scriptures to us with the glory which beams from the Savior's person and throne above. How often are those blessed pages dark to us, as we read them in the closet! until, as we lift up the heart in the prayer, "In thy light let us see light," a sudden glory fills every letter and word, and the light of heaven itself seems to break in upon the soul! It is the frequent experience of the saints, who thus come to understand what the Savior means when He says, "He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you." [St. John xvi, 14.] Take an humble illustration of this illuminating power of the Holy Spirit. On the great promenade of our own city, we will pass before a sign which, in the broad glare of day, is singularly obscure. Slowly and with labor we put together the innumerable little points, which dimly trace the letters of the name as we tediously spell it out. But when night shall draw its curtain around the earth, each of those obscure points becomes a jet of flame, and the name is revealed in living fire from one end of the street to the other. Just so we toil over the text of the Bible, with our cold grammatical construction of its verbal propositions, until in an instant the Spirit of God floods the page with a celestial light, and the promise throbs with the very accents of the Savior's living voice. Thus, in a double way, by inspiration and illumination, does the Holy Ghost carry forward the Prophetical office of Jesus Christ, and become the *other* Comforter.

II. Let us turn now to CHRIST'S PRIESTLY OFFICE. Time will not allow the full discussion of the Spirit's agency as connected with the Redeemer's Priesthood. I can, for example, say nothing of His work in producing the body of Christ: although, as you remember, the angel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." [St. Luke i, 35] Nor can I dwell upon His office in qualifying the human nature of Christ for all the amazing trusts He had assumed: although, if you turn to the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, you will read language like this: "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." And again, "Behold my servant, whom I

uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." [Isaiah xlii, 1.] A little later, in the same prophecy, the Messiah is represented as saying, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek." [Ibid. lxi, 1.] All this must be passed by, notwithstanding the light which it sheds upon the New Testament declaration—"He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." [St. John iii, 34.] Nor can I pause to speak of the Holy Spirit's agency in sanctifying the offering of Christ, making it doubly precious to the Father: though the Apostle declares that "He, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God." [Hebrews ix, 14.] But taking this offering after it has been made, let us from this point trace the Spirit's work in connexion with the Son's Priesthood.

There are two things involved in sacrifice—the offering of the victim upon the altar, and the intercession which is founded upon it. The first constructs the argument, which the second presents and pleads. Thus, in the old economy, the High Priest, on the great day of Atonement, offered the sacrifice in the outer court; and then, with the blood, passed through the veil into the holy of holies and sprinkled the mercy-seat. It was a fit type of Christ, the true High Priest, who, having suffered without the gate, has passed through the heavens with His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us. It is with this in view that the Apostle John represents Christ as the one Comforter: "If any man sin, we have an advocate (paraclete) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." [I John ii, 1.] But when the Advocate has been heard in the chancery of heaven, and the decree has been issued by the Judge, that decree might sleep forever inoperative upon the records of the court, if there be no administrative agent to whom its enforcement may be entrusted. Even in human courts the advocate is not discharged of his client until he is actually instated into all the privileges and rights which have been secured by the decree. Should a hitch occur in the further issues of the case, the advocate must resume his functions at that point, and bear his client into the quiet possession of his ascertained rights. This, then, is the plane of the Spirit's agency, where it blends with that of Jesus, the Advocate. Christ procures for His people all spiritual blessings by His death. He then, by His intercession, sues them out before the throne of His Father. The decree is granted in their favor under this pleading; and then it is handed over to the eternal Spirit, whose function it is to work it into the actual experience of

the believer. As all this is of immense practical importance, you will permit me to illustrate in several particulars.

1. Look at it, then, *in the matter of prayer*. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." [James v, 16.] But what renders prayer "effectual?" Not its length, nor its vehemence, nor its eloquence, nor its passion: but simply the living sympathy which is established between the soul pleading in the closet and the Savior interceding in the heavens. And this is secured through the intervention of the Divine Spirit. He takes the desires which are in the heart of Jesus Christ, and works them into our hearts so that they become our desires. He takes the plea which is upon the lips of the great Advocate above, and seals it upon our lips as our prayer in Christ's blessed name. It is this sweet but secret correspondence between our Head and ourselves that makes true prayer at all. Whatever is beside this is mere posture and the mutter of incantations. Why, my brethren, have I done aught but expound to you that classical passage in the eighth of Romans? "Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." We are familiar with the doctrine of Christ's intercession; but here is that of the Spirit. Have we these two intercessors? Yes, verily; but not divergent and clashing. They are the two Comforters—the one and the other—both converging their distinct offices to one result. The one intercedes *for* us, the other intercedes *within* us. The one sues out our claim before the law; the other works into us the prayer that draws down the gift. And then you remember how the Apostle clinches the truth with the superadded emphasis, "And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." "He that searcheth the hearts"—your hearts, brethren, and mine—finds there, in the bosom of the prayer, "the mind of the Spirit" which indites nothing unaccordant with "the will of God." Here, then, is the nexus between our prayer and God's secret and holy and ordaining purpose. Truly, "we know not what we should pray for as we ought:" but the Holy Ghost, who is the equal of the Father and the Son in all the counsels of the Godhead, knows all that has been hid in the divine will—and He can put into our hearts the desires for just those things which sovereign and ordaining love designs to bestow. And so all the difficulites which an earthly and purely mechanical science puts in the way of prayer, are swept away by the breath of this almighty and free Spirit of God.

2. Look at it, again, *in the matter of pardon.* This, we know, depends entirely upon the atonement of our Lord. He takes His own blood and pleads it on the sinner's behalf, and claims that the legal pardon which it secures shall be carried into effect. The Father and the Son unite—the one as the Supreme Lawgiver, the other as the Exalted Mediator—in committing this pardon to the Holy Spirit. He bears it to earth—arraigns the sinner before the bar of his own conscience—tables against him the accusations of the law which he has broken—beats him off from all his evasions and shifts, until, overwhelmed with guilt, he cries, "What must I do to be saved?" Then, just as he is sinking in despair, the Spirit reveals Christ to him as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world"—implants in him the principle of faith—enables him to receive Jesus as his own personal Savior—and seals upon his conscience a sense of pardon and of full acceptance with God. In all this the Holy Ghost carries the priestly work of Christ to its consummation in our experience, and becomes, as before in the Prophetical office, that *other* Comforter.

3. It may be illustrated, further, *in reference to the temptations and conflicts of the Christian.* The law of development and of growth holds in the spiritual as in the natural life. We are first babes in Christ, needing "the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby;" and when "by reason of use we have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil," then cometh "the strong meat which belongeth to those that are of full age." The trials of life are a necessary discipline to strengthen the Christian graces, as we grow up to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Yet it is required that we should be preserved amidst them all. The strength by which we are sustained, and through which we conquer at the last, is purchased for us by Christ our Lord, and is communicated through the agency of the Holy Spirit. "Simon," said Christ to Peter, "behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." [St. Luke xxii, 31, 32.] Let it be a drop of balm into the hearts that are wounded by the fear of future perils, that Satan shall not have liberty to lay a solitary temptation in our path before the interceding prayer shall have gone up for us from the one Paraclete, securing the grace which the other shall apply.

III. In this rapid trigonometrical survey, let us consider now THE KINGLY OFFICE OF CHRIST. He is truly a King: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." [Psalm ii, 6.] But His kingdom is spiritual, in the administration of which He employs the Holy Ghost

as His Vicar. There needs no human vicar of Christ in this kingdom of His Church, so long as the Holy Ghost lives to perform this solemn and necessary function. Let us trace it in some of its features.

1. *It is the office of the Holy Ghost to quicken.* If Christ be a King, He must have subjects. But we are "dead in trespasses and sins.' The sentence of the law has been executed against those who have violated it—"Ye shall surely die"—and there is no spiritual life in us. How shall we be quickened into life, so as to become the subjects of this living King? "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Just here, then, the Holy Ghost blends His agency with that of the Redeemer, as "He is exalted to be a Prince and a Savior." Christ Jesus, through His sacrificial death, buys back from the law the sinner's forfeited life; and the Holy Ghost breathes it in again, as He quickens us anew. The same Spirit who, at the creation, brooded over the formless chaos and made matter pregnant with all the forms of earthly life—He to whom it is assigned to communicate all life to the creatures, whether it be vegetable life to the plant, or animal life to the brute, or intellectual and moral life to man—He it is who, as the breath of God, renews the spiritual life in the soul that is dead in sin. Being born of the Spirit, we become the living subjects of Jesus the King—who rejoices in this work of that *other* Comforter, whose office is so conspicuously co-ordinated with His own.

2. *It is the Spirit's function to sanctify.* Not only is He the author of life implanted in its germ, but He must preside over its expansion and growth until we are complete in righteousness before God. Hence the emphasis of the promise in the text, "And he shall give you another Comforter, that HE MAY ABIDE WITH YOU FOREVER." The Holy Ghost dwells in the believer to preserve and develop the spiritual life He has communicated—working in him all the graces of the Christian character, and making him meet for the saints' inheritance in light. The Church over which the Savior rules is the kingdom of the redeemed. Having purchased them with His own blood, He is under pledge to present them at last holy and without blame before the Father. And this work He executes through the agency of the Spirit as His Vicar; who represents Him in His absence from the earth by taking up His abode in the church, "that he may sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, and present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." In His kingly office Christ recognizes and commissions the Divine Spirit as the *other* Comforter; by whom His people

shall be made ready for Him, when He "comes to be glorified in his saints and admired in them that believe."

3. *The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Obedience.* If Christ be a King, He must have a law to which obedience must be rendered. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to take the law which the Savior has magnified, and to bind it with new and gracious sanctions upon the consciences of the redeemed. He opens this law to them in all its spirituality and extent—shows their discharge from its curse, in the death of their Substitute and Head—points out the distinction between a *legal* obedience rendered for hire, and an *evangelical* or gracious obedience rendered from love—inspires the sentiment of gratitude and personal affection, which is the spring and source of all obedience that is true—strengthens the Christian in all particular acts of homage and reverence—and sweetens the obedience throughout with the tokens of approval and love by which the King heartens us in His blessed service. Christ dwells within us by His Spirit, as the *other* Comforter, sweetly persuading and enabling us to obey His law; and so we find His "yoke" to be "easy," and His "burden" to be "light," and the service itself becomes "rest to our souls."

4. *The Holy Ghost is the organ of all our communion with God.* It is He who opens the truth to the mind, and enables us to revel in the promises. It is He who takes away "the spirit of bondage again to fear," and bestows "the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father." It is He who inspires us with "boldness in coming to the throne of grace"—and conducts all the correspondence in that "fellowship" we have "with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." It is by Him we "are sealed unto the day of redemption." In all these offices, which He ministers under Jesus our King, does the Holy Spirit stand over against Him, and in conjunction with Him, as the *other* Comforter—carrying on "the work of faith with power" even to the end.

5. Finally, *He is to each of us the Spirit of Glory.* As He renews and then sanctifies, so at length He glorifies. Ah! put off the shoes from your feet as you gather around the bed of the dying saint, for the ground is holy! There, where the believer lays down all the burden of life and enters into rest! There, where the last look of faith is raised to the Crucified One, just before it is swallowed up in sight forever! There, where the last stain of sin is purged from the soul, and it is made clean for heaven! There, where the Holy Ghost completes the believer's likeness to his Lord, to which the last stroke of the pencil is given, and the image is perfect forever! It is not death, but a blessed

translation, when the Holy Ghost finishes His work upon the human soul by this transfiguration into glory. No wonder that a strange halo so often steals over the pale face, and that a faint shadow of joy settles down upon the features of death itself! No wonder that a bright sparkle will sometimes gleam through the mist and the haze of the eye which is beginning to be glazed for the tomb! No wonder if the finger should sometimes point with typical gesture to the open window, and a cry of grateful surprise should sometimes welcome the convoy of angels that come to bear the waiting spirit to its home above! It is perhaps no visible presentation to the bodily senses, but only the vivid impression made upon the soul just passing through its birth into glory. And when our hearts break with pity over the humiliation of the body, could we but know it, that is the moment of truest ecstacy to the spirit. In all human experience there is nothing with the believer to compare with THE LUXURY OF DYING!

Nor is this triumph denied even to the body. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." [Romans viii, 11.] The grave is but the laboratory, where the body undergoes the *material* sanctification adapted to its nature, and analogous to that *spiritual* transformation which is experienced by the soul. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." "This corruptible must put on incorruption." As "we have borne the image of the earthy," we must lay it back in the earth in order that we may be able to "bear the image of the heavenly." During the long sleep of the tomb, the Holy Ghost has it in charge to watch over the sacred dust. When the Master shall call for us "with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God," He, who is the Quickener, shall rebuild the body from the dust into which it has mouldered. No longer the "natural body" which was "sown in corruption," it will be raised "a spiritual body"—"fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body:" and so "we shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, to be ever with the Lord." Oh, we have no need, like the old Greeks, to feed the funeral lamp with daily oil, to chase away the gloom of the vault! The Holy Ghost has lighted the promise of the resurrection, which burns with its serene hope always at the pillow where our aching heads are laid to rest—and keeps His constant vigil over our sleeping forms until the morning dawns.

Is this all? No: through the long eternity that succeeds He shall dwell in the glorified saints, the bond of spiritual union with Christ their Head—always interpreting to them the new revelations of glory, which the Son shall eternally lift up from the infinite in the Godhead.

Oh! how it makes one long to be away—up there beyond the stars, to enjoy this knowledge of God; and to spread these expanding affections over the beautiful and the good, as they shine out from the throne of God and the Lamb forever! My brethren, is it not plain as the alphabet, this doctrine of the *other* Comforter? Blessed be God for them both—the *one*, and the *other!* "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter"—"and the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."

Does this discourse require a special application? Or, has the truth been so sweet that it has applied itself all the way through? See the ample provision that is made in the Gospel for the salvation of man. Let us not be satisfied with merely general and vague conceptions of the mighty plan; but as far as it is revealed to us, let us strive to look into its close and beautiful articulations. It is no ill-jointed and indefinite scheme, but perfect and compact in all its parts. And as you dwell upon the harmony and proportion of its features, learn to trust in it with a perfect heart, and to rejoice in the glory of its precious hopes.

Does any one say, all this is but the dream of an enthusiast? Verily, my hearer, God is not far from us, as too many suppose. We can turn nowhere without beholding the traces of His presence and His power. The heavens above us sparkle with the testimonies of His being and of His glory. The earth upon which we tread is a grand temple—upon every pillar of which, as upon the obelisks of Egypt, is the hieroglyph of His finger. As I walk up and down through the aisles of this vast cathedral of the universe, voices come up from air, earth and sea, which testify of God. The stars, which sweep through the void immense, yield their music to the listening ear of angels. The ocean, with its deep, hoarse bass, swells the anthem back to the stars. The winds whisper God's secret in the tops of the trees, and then breathe it to the flowers which they stoop to kiss. And these flowers, in their turn, give forth their fragrance as the breath of their praise. Say, shall I come down from all this high testimony of Jehovah to a poor, earth-born philosophy which tells me that man is only a pismire, and God is nothing but a dream? No, skeptic, no; I cannot stand with you upon the bleak, dreary waste of deism. I am pierced through with the cold. The dank air of your charnel-house stifles me. Let me go, let me go; let me dream these dreams of Christian faith and hope, until I awake in the daylight of heaven. Let me tread every roundle of Jacob's sacred ladder, till I mount up and be with God.

XVIII.

THE DARKNESS OF PROVIDENCE.

ST. JOHN xiii, 7:—"*Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*"

The narrative, with which these words are connected, is entirely unique. The feet washing, which is here described, cannot be exalted into a sacrament without subverting the very nature of a sacrament. Lacking, as it does, all the features of such an ordinance, the idea would never have been broached except by an uncritical ritualism, which revels in external symbols of devotion. It was simply an acted parable, for the more emphatic conveyance of religious truth. After the Passover, and before the institution of the Supper, our Lord rises from the table, girds Himself with a towel, pours water into a basin, and proceeds to wash His disciples' feet. It is well worthy your notice that this entire scene is prefaced by a very remarkable declaration on the part of the historian: "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments"—a very clear and strong statement of Christ's original and conscious dignity. So that the entire scene was intended to convey to those disciples a lesson of great *humility;* teaching them that when they went forth under His commission to organize and to found the Church, they must expect to find their honor and their dignity in their service. It also inculcates the principle of *mutual love*, and that, too, in the form of affectionate care for each other: "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." And then, beyond all this, there lies, at the very core of the entire story, a most impressive lesson; that even the regenerate need to be *continually purified* from the daily sins which they contract. "He that is washed," says the Savior to Peter, "needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." However our nature may be renewed and sanctified by the indwelling Spirit, there is always need, even to the purest, that they shall wash their feet from the stains contracted by their contact with the defiling world.

As He passes around the circle, the Master comes to Peter, whose impulses, oftentimes misdirected, were exceedingly noble and generous. Peter recoils from this incongruity, by which their respective positions seem to be reversed. "Dost thou wash my feet?"—"Thou shalt never wash my feet." And, when the answer comes to him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me"—with the heavy lurch, which so often characterizes an impetuous and earnest nature, Peter swings completely around to the other extreme, and says, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

It is no misapplication of this passage, my hearers, to carry it over to those dealings of God's Providence with us, which are oftentimes profoundly mysterious and dark. For the very spirit of the passage includes these; and to each of us, when we are passing under the cloud and through the sea, the voice breaks upon the ear: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." I propose, then, to consider some of THE REASONS WHY THE DISPENSATIONS OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE TO US ARE SO PROFOUNDLY MYSTERIOUS; rendering it always extremely difficult, and often unsafe, to attempt the explanation of them whilst we are passing through them.

1. *It is necessary in order to the assertion of God's absolute supremacy.* God's supremacy immeasurably surpasses every representation of it on the human sphere. However despotic may be the power which man acquires over his fellow men, it never extends beyond their persons and their fortunes. The most rigorous despot that ever sat upon a throne can do nothing more than constrain my external acts, bringing my person and form beneath his control, and subduing my fortunes to his will. The despot has no power—thanks be to God, who is so careful to preserve in every human being that glorious image of Himself which He has stamped upon the soul—to penetrate within the domain of the heart, and rule the thoughts and the affections and the desires with which that inner nature is continually beating. Even the prisoner in his cell, bound hand and foot by a staple to the wall, is perfectly free in the sweep of his thoughts and in the extension of his desires. But when God claims supremacy, it is a supremacy over the whole nature of man, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." It is a supremacy, not only over the actions of a man, over the person of a man, over the fortunes of a man, but over his inclinations and affections and instincts and aims. This may be safely inferred from the very attributes with which the Divine Being is invested to our thought. For if He be infinite in His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, holiness and

truth, all these perfections exalt Him to that necessary supremacy; and our wisdom and our power and our justice can never be brought into competition with perfections which are infinite in Him.

Then, too, remember that there was a point in the eternity of the past when God was absolutely alone; when He had not as yet created a single world and thrown it into space; when none of the sons of God bowed before His throne in the kingdom above, and man had not as yet been fashioned from the dust of the earth. From what the old theologians two centuries ago were, in their quaint language, accustomed to describe as the *onliness* of God, arises His natural supremacy. For all intelligent beings, in the worlds where God has placed them, live and move and have their being only in Him; and as their very existence is derived and contingent, so must their will always move within the orbit which His will circumscribes around it.

Now, this attribute of sovereignty, or supremacy, is that which, in the Scriptures, God guards with the greatest jealousy. "Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne;" "He giveth not account of any of his matters;" "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hands, or say to him, What doest thou?" Not even God's holiness, which is His consummate perfection, as it is the predicate of all His attributes and qualifies each one of them, is guarded with such caution and such jealousy as that supreme control which He asserts over all the beings whom He has made. And the reason is perfectly obvious. It arises from the very autonomy of man's nature, as a being made in His own image and endowed with powers of intelligence and of will. Ah! my hearers, the greatest work of God, short of that work by which He redeemed the lost sinner from death, was the work by which He created a being in His own image and after His own likeness. All the wisdom and power displayed in the creation of the material universe does not begin to compare with the splendor of that power which He exercised in the creation of man. Worlds and systems of worlds are made of inert and dead matter: and although we can form no conception of that original creative act, by which he produced it out of nothing, calling it into being by the simple word of His power—yet, when He had, by that power, created it and fashioned it into worlds, all these, from the nature of the material out of which they are constructed, were but as the putty which is within our fingers to be moulded and shaped according to the pattern which we desire. But when He created an angel, and when He

created man, endowing these with reason, with intelligence, with affections and with will, He introduces the mighty problem which it is the whole design of Providence and of grace to solve. For if He gives to you or to me a will, from the very nature of this attribute there is always the peril of insurrection against the authority and dominion of Jehovah. These creatures, endowed with this mighty attribute, must, from the very nature of it, move with perfect spontaneity upon their own plane. The will of the creature may lift itself in antagonism to the will of God; and as Jehovah allows the freest play to the exercise of this will on the part of the creature, it becomes indispensable to His own protection, and necessary to secure the interests of His government at large, that He shall guard His supremacy over these very beings whom He has endowed with these high perfections. It is not enough, then, that we shall apprehend the sovereignty of God with the intellect alone, so as to postulate it in our creed and assume it as an ultimate fact. It is a truth which is to be embraced with the affections, as truly as with the intellect; and our entire nature must be brought to acquiesce in the authority of that God who does according to His pleasure in all the worlds which He has made.

From this arises the necessary obscurity of Providence. For if God gave, all through our history, an immediate and perfect explanation of what He does, our acquiescence would rest upon our own conviction of what is right and proper under the circumstances; and would not rest simply and alone upon the divine will. As long as we are under a condition of discipline, it is indispensable that this will, which God makes free, and which moves upon its own plane without constraint, shall, at the same time, bow with perfect deference to the will which is over it; and that man, through all his history, shall always accept what God does, simply and alone upon the ground that HE DOES IT. "I was dumb," says the Psalmist; "I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." In the outworkings of Providence, by the very darkness which rests upon it, God is continuously asserting His absolute supremacy.

2. Again, *this darkness rests upon Providence, because of its complexity.* Ah! if the dealings of God had reference only to ourselves, they would be hard enough to understand. What man can tell the uses to which God means to put him in after years? Did you, in your boyhood, dream of what would be your calling, your influence, your power, your mission, as a man? God, having in view certain works, which we are to achieve for Him in the years that are ahead of us in life, puts us into His school; passes us through this discipline, and through that; and

unless we could know the end from the beginning, and could understand all His designs in reference to ourselves, we are in no condition to interpret immediately His Providence. How much less do we, in this world, know all the uses to which God will put us in the great hereafter. These threads of the earthly life, how they stretch beyond the chasm of death and are woven into a new web above the stars! And since we never can comprehend the peculiar work which God will assign to us in eternity, nor anticipate the missions upon which we shall be sent there —what grand achievements we are to perform for the glory of God when we stand in His presence—therefore it is, that we cannot begin to understand the discipline by which we are prepared for that high calling.

Even if these dispensations should be restricted to ourselves, from the nature of the case we could not adequately comprehend them. But, my hearers, how those Providences ramify and touch all around us in life! There is the web in the loom, made up of myriads of threads crossing each other at right angles; and each single thread is indispensable to the integrity of the texture, and has a relation to all the other threads which are woven with it into the common fabric. It is just like the diagrams of the mathematician, upon the blackboard; where the same line will sometimes represent the side of very different figures—where the hypothenuse of one triangle will be made the base of another, indispensable to the demonstration of the proposition, as it involves them both. Our personal history is made to touch another man's personal history; and so our influence ramifies through the whole society in which we move: and these Providences of God, as they affect us, cannot possibly be understood, unless we knew precisely the relations in which they were intended to bear upon others who are around us in life. It is perfectly clear, upon the statement of it, that we are in no condition to explain the darkness of God's Providential dealings, unless we knew all the relations of all the events which occur in our history.

3. *The surprise with which we are overtaken, and the violent emotions with which we are agitated, render us incompetent to explain or to understand anything.* How often does the bolt fall from a perfectly clear sky upon our heads! When all is bright and peaceful around us, and our home seems to be founded upon a rock, there falls one crushing blow from the hand of God, which shatters our joys and leaves us prostrate in the dust. And, what is still more mysterious, how our misfortunes and afflictions link into each other; or, like our mercies, grow together in a cluster like a bunch of grapes. When a heavy sorrow has fallen upon the heart, ere we have recovered ourselves and begin to understand

God's purpose in it, lo, it is succeeded by another still more severe; and that by a third, and a fourth, and a fifth—until we are not only stunned, but overwhelmed and crushed to the earth.

When these emotions swell within us, how can we, under the agitation which they produce, calmly estimate the influence of this and that and the other affliction upon ourselves and upon those around us in life? We can only exclaim, as did the Psalmist, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water spouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." We are just like the man wrecked at sea, who finds himself borne upon a mountain wave so high that it seems he shall be dashed against the stars; when, as suddenly, he is let down into the depths of the sea, and feels as if he were about to be swallowed up in the womb of the earth—while on every side the towering billows, like overhanging cliffs, threaten to topple over and bury him in a fathomless tomb forever. This is the image by which David describes the consternation of a soul in the tempest of its grief: Deep here calleth unto deep there; "all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Who, then, is able, under this agitation, to explain satisfactorily to himself or to others the reason of God's dispensations towards him? No, my brethren, it is not when the affections are bleeding with the rupture which has torn them from the idol which they embraced—not when the instinct of love is going out in its wild cry after that which the grave has seized as its prey—it is not then that we are composed enough to interpret the meaning of that particular bereavement. Thus, by reason of the surprise with which we are overwhelmed, and the agitation of these emotions, we are in no condition to make the interpretation which is necessary.

4. *Our spiritual state is oftentimes inadequate to receive the explanation, if God should make it to us.* It was a pregnant word of Christ to His disciples, when He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Therefore, through all His public ministry, He spoke to them in parables; planting the seeds of truth in the secret places of their memory, which should spring up, in the after-time, in the fulness of Christian knowledge. Dark hints were thrown now and then upon the mind; which they were perfectly incapable of construing, but which should become intelligible enough in the clearer revelation of a later day. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."

Now, the design of these dispensations is to enlarge our affections and

render us capable of receiving the explanation, of which we are utterly incapable at first. Why, it is the great art of the human educator—that which constitutes the particular difficulty in all our theories of training the young—to know exactly how much knowledge at a given time we can impart to the expanding mind; how to proportion the knowledge we convey to the ability to receive; lest, by the over-communication, which shall surpass their receptive capacity, we overload and stunt the very faculties which we desire to stimulate and train. Now God, in His infinite wisdom, adjusts His Providences to that end; communicating no more to us than we are in a spiritual condition to receive—the discipline itself enlarging our spiritual powers, so that we shall understand the explanation He may in due time afford. Thus it happens, in our advancing Christian experience, that we are often able, partially, at least, to understand what was utterly mysterious and incomprehensible when it occurred.

5. *The great law of faith renders indispensable this mystery in Providence.* Faith is the law of this probationary dispensation, just as knowledge is the law of the dispensation of reward. We may know by and by, when the Lord opens His hand and bestows upon us the reward of our patient and willing service here; but during the period in which He is training us for future glory, the fundamental law must be that of faith. How often is this principle overlooked by the man of the world; expecting to realize, through a state of discipline, that which, from the nature of the case, never can be enjoyed except in a state of perfection and reward.

See how, in this earthly sphere, we are put under the law of faith. It extends to the intellectual part of our nature, and hence the mystery which you find in the doctrine. If a man complain that the doctrines of God's word are utterly incomprehensible, it is easy to return a two-fold answer; and say, in the first place, this mystery arises from the nature of the truth itself. God, being infinite, cannot be perfectly apprehended by the finite. These truths, which God communicates concerning His being and the operations of His will, must, like the mountains, lift their grey heads and hide themselves in the clouds of heaven: and though we may pass around the base of these truths, and be able partly to take their measure, we must ourselves enter the world into which those mysteries are lost from our sight, before we can take their altitude. Then we may return the second answer—that, as God is here putting us in training for the future world of knowledge and of glory, this intellect of ours must, along with the affections and with the will, be put upon probation. Why, my hearers, it is *the whole man* that

God is now proving, educating, training—man, with His bodily powers; man, with all the affections of the soul; man, in the department of the will; and is not the intellect just as truly a part of our constitution as the other faculties I have named? Does not God, in this world, put the intellect of the creature upon its trial before Him, so that he shall see the reasonableness of accepting all the high mysteries of grace simply and alone by the testimony upon which they rest?

This law of faith extends no less to the conscience; inasmuch as the divine law is made the sole standard of rectitude to man, and he is not permitted to guide himself by the operations of his natural conscience, except as that conscience is enlightened, directed and stimulated by the infallible rule of right which God has enjoined. This law of faith also applies to the affections; since we are to yield a cordial and loving trust, though God Himself is wrapped in clouds. Equally does this law of faith extend to the will; as we are constrained to defer to the naked authority of God, and obey His commands.

The fundamental law of earth is the law of faith; and the whole dispensation, under which God places us, would be reversed, if premature explanations were given of the Providences which we experience. If God explains this sickness or that bankruptcy, or this bereavement and that sorrow, when we are passing through it, there could be no exercise of faith—and the law of the whole economy under which we are placed would be completely reversed. It is necessary, then, from the nature of the discipline under which He is training us for eternity, that there should rest this darkness upon His Providence, of which we so often complain.

But the text declares—and the declaration is of the nature of a promise—that WHATEVER BE THE DARKNESS RESTING UPON THE DISPENSATIONS OF PROVIDENCE, IT WILL BE TEMPORARY. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." In the case of Peter, that promise was very soon fulfilled; for when the Master had washed the disciples' feet, He laid aside the towel with which He was girded, and seated Himself at the table, and gave the explanation: "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If, I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet." It was the germinant fulfilment to Peter. And yet, with all the understanding which Peter had of this mystery through the explanation which was given to him, how far short did it fall of the larger knowledge which he

had on the day of Pentecost? when, through the inspiration of the Spirit, he had a more complete knowledge of the whole scheme of grace, and went forth, under the influence of that Spirit, preaching the wonderful sermon in the streets of Jerusalem, under which three thousand souls were converted at once. But even that knowledge, given to him on the day of Pentecost, was itself but a symbol of the larger knowledge which he should have beyond the grave. Just so, my brethren, it is with us in the different stages of our Christian experience. Many a dispensation of God towards us is dark and inexplicable, until God lifts us up by the hand and brings us into higher views of Himself and of His grace. Then we look back reflectively upon that which we experienced long ago, and begin to understand it. And yet, with all that knowledge which a growing experience affords, it is but the germinant fulfilment of that which will be entirely accomplished when we enter into the world of life and blessedness above. There we shall no longer see as through a glass darkly, but face to face, and shall know even as we ourselves are known.

In regard to the revelation which is to be given to us of these mysterious Providences, I have several considerations to submit.

1. *There is a strong presumption of it, from the known connexion between the two worlds.* Man has "a true body and a reasonable soul," and thus the two worlds are united in himself. Through the body of flesh, he is of the earth and is related to earth; through the immortal soul, he is a native of the skies and must find his home above. Though depraved by sin and wholly turned away from the holiness of God, there is a spiritual instinct in man which yearns to overleap the bounds of sense and to grasp the things which are beyond. These aspirations after the spiritual and the eternal, reveal that he belongs to a higher sphere. As "fire ascending seeks the sun," so the unconquerable instincts of his spiritual nature leap upward, with a restless discontent of the earthly and the material. Just as the balloon, by its own buoyancy, strains the cords which impedes its flight, and then mounts through the air and is lost in the clouds: so the cords of sense bind the soul to the objects of time, which yet long to burst from the constraint and rise into its kindred element. The very principle of ambition in man, which grasps at sceptres and titles on earth, is but the finger upon the dial-plate of our spiritual nature, pointing to hopes and to rewards which can only be realized in the spiritual world.

But when the soul is renewed by the Holy Ghost, and through its progressive sanctification is more and more recovered from the dominion

of sin, there is a clearer apprehension of spiritual realities, and a holier longing for that world which Jehovah fills with the glory of His presence. Why need I speak of this to those who are so familiar with the blessed privilege of prayer? Here, in the closet, we make the telegraphic signals which go up through the heavens and touch the very throne upon which our eternal Father sits. We play with our hands, as it were, upon the keys of a mysterious instrument, and thoughts, affections, desires ascend from the depths within us, which instantly repose upon God and the joys of the upper kingdom. And when we come to the border-line which, at death, separates the two worlds, what a strange overlapping we are sometimes permitted to see! What visions of heaven do often burst upon the spirit, just while it is engaged with the mortal agonies of nature's last hour! The crushing of the timbers of this earthly frame only seems to let in the light of the glory that is beyond. Must not the mystery of this union between matter and spirit be cleared up at last? Shall the two worlds touch each other in us, all through our earthly career, and their relations not be disclosed to us at length? In this occasional overlapping of the two, is there no intimation that what is dark here will be made light there?

I have no idea that, when we pass into eternity, we are to mingle like the drops in the ocean, losing the separateness and individuality which belongs to each. The thread which death breaks at the grave is gathered up by an unseen hand and woven into new relations and into new purposes in the world of light and of glory. We shall enter heaven, if it is God's purpose to carry us there, with our distinct individuality; each man carrying his own personality, and, with it, all the memories which connect him with the world of training in which he lived below. The career upon which we shall enter there will be as distinctly personal, as distinctly characterized by all that is individual and peculiar to us, as ever was the career which we ran whilst here upon the earth. The two worlds lie close together. It is one step across the brook, and we are over; transfigured it may be, glorified into the image of our Divine Head, but yet the identical and real persons there that we were here. Beyond a question, our whole destiny beyond the grave is to be colored by that which marked our history upon the earth. It is this which renders our earthly existence, brief though it be, and checkered, of such sublime significance. At every moment we touch wires that vibrate in eternity.

2. Then, too, *in the world to come all the limitations of sense will be removed.* It is this which now fetters us, and makes it so hard for us to

understand and know. In the world of reward we shall possess what the Apostle calls the "spiritual body." What its attributes are, the Word has not revealed to us. It will be body, but it will be spirit. It will be a spiritual body, with instincts and appetites and organs and senses that are peculiar to it as such—able to take cognizance of what belongs to a spiritual world. Just as our natural senses, which are adequate to the flesh which we wear, are suited to give us apprehensions of matter, of the things that are substantive and real; so shall the spiritual body possess spiritual organs, which shall enable it to understand and to investigate the spiritual world. I think one of the most beautiful lessons which the magnificent science of this age teaches us—for, brethren, I have no jealousy in my heart of any of the adventures which science makes, nor of any of the stores of knowledge which she communicates. I have a sublime confidence that all truth is one. God will heal the schisms which spring up between the advocates and the investigators of truth; for truth springs from Himself, and it possesses the real unity which exists in Him. Truth, as God stamps it upon the frame of the universe—truth, as He writes it with His own finger upon the rocks in the bowels of the earth—truth, as it is written upon the face of the sky, the stars themselves being the embossed types by which He prints the great attributes of His being and of His glory upon the parchment of the sky: all truth, whether it be of nature or of grace, we shall be able in the spiritual world to read, not only in its absolute reality, but in its most perfect and blessed unity. But the lesson, which science gives us in the revelations which she is making to us at this day, is just this lesson of humility. Wherever she opens a rift through the cloud, and we gaze with such enthusiasm and delight upon the truth that is beyond, all that truth is itself veiled in a robe of mystery. Science, lighting her torch, as she ought to do, at the altars of God, pursues her march with adventurous spirit into those mysteries that are beyond; and as she uncovers one mystery, there opens another; and she passes from mystery to mystery, just as truly as she passes from knowledge to knowledge. We feel, in the very height and glory of all these investigations, how the spirit of man is here fettered by sense—how unable we are with these eyes to see right through matter into that which lies beyond it, and to grasp those forms of knowledge which are to be found in matter itself. Ah! if we are ever permitted to reach the world where these limitations of sense shall be thrown aside, we shall be able to survey God's solemn Providence, and the darkness will disappear. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

3. In the third place, *God's plans will there be complete*, and the embargo which is here put upon our knowledge, from the incompleteness of the view which we have of God's purposes, will be entirely removed. There it will be spread out in all its beautiful connections. Our own personal history will be brought to a close, and that personal history as it is involved in the history of those with whom we associated in life. The parent, with the child that was born of his loins—the influence which he exerted upon that child through the one and twenty years of its minority, when it was placed under his control; this influence, as it goes down from that child to the children of the next generation; and then unto the third generation; and as it widens out over the broad sea of human existence: all will be brought to a grand conclusion when we stand before the judgment bar, and still more when we view it in the light of God's eternal throne. All these things being consummated, and all the parts of them being brought together in all their relationships, we will, at a glance, spread our eye over the whole of God's providential dealings with us; and knowing the end from the beginning, the darkness will be dispelled. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

4. Fourthly, *it is necessary to God's own vindication that there shall be a removal of all this obscurity from the dispensations of His Providence.* Brethren, I hear men every day complaining of the darkness of God's dealings with them, as though it were an extreme hardship which they are called to encounter. Do they pause to reflect that it is just as great a hardship upon God as upon them? That the very darkness which rests upon these dispensations exposes God constantly to misconstruction? That we are all the time misinterpreting Him, and laying hard things to His account, and that He is covering Himself over all the time with a cloud of suspicion, which He could instantly dispel if He would only speak and interpret to us the reason of His dealings? Now, if God is willing to undergo all this, and to allow this obscurity to lie upon His administration, we ought not to complain of it as a hardship to us. But God will not always lie under suspicion, and therefore He has appointed that solemn judgment, where the things that are crooked here shall be made straight, and the things that are dark here shall be enlightened It is for this that the saint longs for the judgment; that God, in the glory of His law, and Jesus, in the splendor of His grace, may alike be vindicated before the universe. Although that day be clothed with terrors, which make the soul dread to meet it, yet, when it is remembered that God shall there vindicate beyond all suspicion the glory of

His administration, I think you and I can afford to long for its coming. And if, at the judgment, when the books are opened and God reveals all the purposes both of law and of grace, the darkness shall be removed, how much more when He makes it plain to us in the light which beams from His person and from His throne in heaven.

5. And now, lastly, *there will be no darkness upon these Providences when we get to heaven, because that is the state and the place of reward and of praise.* Reward! The word itself is connected with a state of trial. There might be happiness in heaven, but it would not be reward if it were not fastened to the trials and afflictions and toils through which we passed here upon the earth. There might be deep suffering in hell, but it would not be punishment unless it were connected with the misdeeds with which we are charged in this present life. As the Scriptures plainly reveal heaven to us as the state of blessedness and reward, the connection between this life and that must be made plain to us. In order that we may apprehend the joys into which we are introduced as the rewards which the Master bestows upon us, we shall be obliged to survey our life upon the earth precisely as it stood in all its connections; and, therefore, the mysterious and the dark will be perfectly explained. And the word, *praise,* indispensably requires that we embalm in song our whole experience. Brethren, we can adore God for what He is, when we behold Him "glorious in holiness and fearful in praises;" but we praise Him out of the fulness of our own experience of His love; and therein consists the distinction between adoration and praise. We adore God for what He is; we praise God for what He does.

In heaven each saint shall possess his individual harp, and the strings of that harp shall give forth their own peculiar note. The song which we shall sing to that harp, shall be the song which is taught us by our own experience here upon the earth. Listen to the great anthem as it is chaunted by the army around the throne: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain"—"Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever:" showing how the saint comes down in his thought to the hole of the pit out of which he was digged, and reveals, through his song of praise and of joy, all that the Lord's grace did with him and through him when he was upon the earth, struggling against temptation, fighting against spiritual adversaries, and crucifying the flesh. We shall go into that upper world with our own personality, in our individual experience; and every constituent element that entered into our earthly history will pour itself into

the song which we shall individually chaunt to the praise of God above. It is the union of all these experiences in the joy of that upper world which constitutes the harmony of the praise there.

I have thus attempted to show not only why darkness must rest upon the dispensations of God's Providence, but why, in the end, that darkness must be removed. Bear with me a minute or two while I deduce just two reflections:

The first is, that *Providence, however dark, is still a guide;* because it shuts up all ways but one. Just as when the Israelites were escaping from Egypt, they could not go back because the pursuing hosts of Egypt were behind; nor to the right hand nor to the left hand, because the mountains rose up like walls to hem them in. There was but one way by which they could go, and that was *forward*—although that forward march must be through the waters of the sea. Yet all other escape being cut off, no other outlet from their peril opened before them; and therefore the command of Jehovah to those marching hosts is "Go forward." As they obeyed it, lo, there was a dry path for them in the bed of the sea, while its waters were piled up, on either hand, as walls. Brethren, Providence is a guide, whether we can comprehend it or not. He shuts us up here and there, and there and here; as we turn upon every side, we see but one path open before us; and just because it is the only path, we understand our duty to go forward in obedience to the divine command, and trust upon the divine protection and blessing.

Then, brethren, see your privilege to lie upon your Father's bosom and repose upon your Father's love. "Clouds and darkness are round about him, but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Oh! the sweetness of the word: eternal justice, the everlasting foundation upon which God's throne rests! Can you trust? If you cannot, read a little further: "Mercy and truth shall go before thy face." What do you want more than that, afflicted saint? What, though clouds be round about Him? What, though He hide Himself in a thick pavilion? Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne; mercy and truth go before His face. As the lictors before the ancient Roman magistrate, so these perfections of God go before His face, leading us into the paths in which we are to walk. Let us cast ourselves, then, upon the bosom of our Father and our King, who will bear the trust. He will make our righteousness to shine "as brightness," and our "salvation as the lamp that burneth;" and we shall know hereafter, in the blessed sense that we shall APPROVE.

XIX.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

HEBREWS xii, 2:—"*Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.*"

In the preceding chapter, the Apostle gathers together the Martyrs and Confessors of the ancient church, as witnesses of the Christian race. The allusion to the games of ancient Greece is too evident to be mistaken: when, as you remember, the whole population thronged to one place, to behold the achievements of their athletes—forming a splendid audience, before whom historians, philosophers and poets recited the inspirations of their genius. In like manner the Apostle assembles, as it were, in one vast amphitheatre, all the worthies of the ancient church, that they may view the trials, the conflicts and the triumphs of the believer. We all know the stimulus to noble deeds when they can be wrought in the presence of an applauding multitude: how much more, when that multitude is no common rabble, but consists of the choicest spirits of every age, who have immortalized their names by deeds of prowess. Imagine a trumpet call to wake up from the dead all the heroes of past history; what an incentive would their presence afford to the heroic spirits of to-day. "Thirty centuries," said Napoleon to his soldiers upon the plains of Africa, "look down upon you from those pyramids." It was the same principle—he adjuring his troops, by all the associations of the heroic past, to eclipse them in the glory of their present deeds.

It is just the picture which is drawn by the Apostle here. He presents an army of Christian heroes who, in all the ages of the Church, have run the same race with ourselves, have triumphed by the same faith to which we are summoned, and who are, therefore, able to enter with kindred sympathy into our conflicts, and to swell the applause of our triumphs. "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." And as we run the eye along the line of illustration,

beginning with Abel at its commencement, and terminating with the last of the prophets, it finds its climax in the language of the text, "looking unto Jesus," who Himself heads the immortal procession; who illustrates the same faith by which we ourselves conquer; who presides over the solemnities of the scene; who is Himself the arbiter of the race, and distributes the final prize. In those games of ancient Greece, the racer could not pause to cast more than a side glance upon the throng which surrounded him; for his gaze was riveted upon the judge at the goal, whose decision was to proclaim his success or defeat. So we, my brethren, may feel the stimulus of the presence of this cloud of witnesses, as they bend down from their thrones above to look upon us in our struggle; yet, in all the march, must we "look unto Jesus," who, as the leader and the perfecter of our faith, stands at the goal, stretching aloft the olive wreath with which His own brow is adorned, that He may place it upon the head of the victor, who, by the same faith, shall overcome the world and win the glories of the upper kingdom.

This brings me, then, to the topic of this morning's discourse: THE WONDERFUL POWER OF ENDURANCE IN THE CHRISTIAN RACE, THROUGH LOOKING TO JESUS AT EVERY STAGE OF IT.

1. *We "look to Jesus" as the sublime exemplar of the faith which is spoken of in the context.* I start from this point of view, partly because it is the lowest; and partly because it is the prominent thought lying in the Apostle's mind and in the Apostle's utterance. "Who," he adds, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." "Looking to Jesus"—Himself the author of this very faith; who, in His earthly pilgrimage, fixed His eye upon the crown, and, for the sake of it, endured the cross and despised the shame, and now, in the grandeur of His triumph, is "set down at the right hand of the throne of God." "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

Perhaps, my hearers, at the first presentation, you shrink from the thought as somewhat lowering your conception of the Savior's dignity; when He is presented to the mind as working out His mission upon the earth by the same faith through which we accomplish ours. But remember, that Christ was as truly man as He was truly God: that, in His mysterious complex person, these two natures, the divine and the human, lay side by side without mixture and without confusion; and these natures, and all the acts which proceeded from them, are never to be confounded. If you will allow a by-thought as I pass along, it is

just this that makes it always unsafe and, it would seem to a truly sensitive Christian spirit, in a little measure profane, for uninspired men to seek to write the life of Christ. No man has ever made the effort who has not been precipitated into error, by the compulsion put upon him to separate what in the person of Jesus Christ ought always to be combined: seeking to scan the proportions of that human nature which never subsisted alone and of itself, but always in mysterious conjunction with the divine person which assumed it in intimate union with itself. Ah! my brethren, this human nature of Christ—shall we discount it? In the attempt, you destroy the person of your Lord just as substantively as though you denied His divinity. He was Man of man, just as truly as He was God of God—true God and very man. In His human body, He felt the pressure of those infirmities and weaknesses which always must press upon the flesh here; in His human sympathies and affections, He found His bosom friends in three of the twelve, as they were gathered in the inner circle around His person; and often He sought repose from His labors, in the pious and quiet home at Bethany, with the sisters and with Lazarus, their brother.

In considering Christ as an example of faith, we do not, of course, ascribe it to Him in that specific form by which we ourselves are knit to Him, and through which we are justified in the sight of God. He was never a sinner, needing, in the same sense with us, to be delivered from the condemnation of the law. Yet even here, there is a wonderful analogy which would render the comparison theologically safe. As our substitute under the law, working out for us the righteousness by which we are justified, His trust was steadily fixed upon the covenant pledge of the Father that His perfect obedience would be accepted—and that upon the ground of His entire satisfaction of all the claims of justice, He would be judicially discharged from the penalty which He had exhausted. Of this Peter spake, in his Pentecostal discourse. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." [Acts ii, 24] And again, Paul declares, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." [Romans vi, 9.] In this sense, as our Representative and Head, the faith of Jesus looked to the promise of His justification before the law, through the perfection of His obedience; as we, by the faith which His Spirit imparts, look for our justification upon precisely the same ground.

Indeed, the faith which is described in the preceding chapter, with which the text stands in such close connection, is faith in its broadest

and most generic sense of simple trust in the power and in the promise of Jehovah. As you look down the vista, there is Abel at the extremity of the line, whose faith was simple and comprehensive; not broken into details, but simply holding fast to the great doctrine of atoning sacrifice, as he brought the firstlings of his flock and offered them upon the altar to God. This faith is more varied as you come to Abraham and to Moses, because to these more definite and special promises were made; and it is still more enlarged as you come to the prophets, to whom broader revelations were afforded. But its highest illustration is found in the person, example and work of our blessed Lord. Ah! my brethren, was there no faith in the Lord Jesus Christ when, in the hour of His temptation, He thrice met the assault of the adversary by appealing to the Word, and saying each time, "It is written?" Was there no faith in the Lord Jesus when He put aside that splendid vision of all the kingdoms laid at His feet, in order that He might embrace the cross and a life of suffering and reproach? Was there no faith in the Lord Jesus when, in the garden of Gethsemane, He held His conscious omnipotence in arrest and submitted Himself a captive to the band of traitors? Was there no faith in the Lord Jesus when, hanging upon the tree, He heard the clamors of the mocking rabble, saying, "Come down from the cross and we will believe on thee"—having power to obey their challenge, and, by that very descent, forever to confound their malice? Was there no faith in the Lord Jesus when He meekly bowed His head and gave up the ghost with the prayer, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," in the joyful assurance of an early resurrection? "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." Was there no faith in this human Christ, in His ascension to His Father, when He leaves His Church apparently dismembered and without protection here upon the earth?

Oh! say not it is a dishonor to our Lord, to look upon Him as the pattern and exemplar of the faith by which we achieve our spiritual victories. Brethren, there is no grace possible to the child of God upon the earth, except it had been first achieved by his glorious Head; and, through this achievement, treasured up in Him to be communicated in the hour of need. All the humility, all the patience, all the prayerfulness by which we are characterized in this world, become possibilities in our experience, because they pre-existed in the experience of Him who is our Lord and our Head, from whom we continually draw our spiritual life. Look at Christ's prayerfulness—confessing in secret before His

Father the weakness and helplessness of the nature which he had assumed, and which could only be supported from above. Hear His appeal to His own obedience to His Father, which He represents to His disciples as the pattern of their obedience: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my father's commandments, and abide in his love." Therefore, in the text, Paul describes Him as the leader of our faith—the leader of those who, under the old economy, trusted in the promises of the old covenant—the leader of those that come after Him, and believe the blessed promise, which He has left as His legacy: the leader of their faith, historically working out the mighty principle, so that it shall substantively exist and be held forth to their gaze in His human experience—the originator of our faith and, as the Apostle also expresses it, the perfecter of it—not only its *author* but its *finisher*. It is hardly an over-refinement of thought in those who say that Christ is the perfecter of this faith, because He has brought that principle of faith to its absolute perfection in Himself. Having originated the faith, having conspicuously adorned and illustrated it, He brings it, in His own final triumph, to its consummation. As He is the author and finisher of the faith, you and I, as we, through faith, overcome the world, do it as we "look to Jesus." In those moments of severe conflict, when all the powers of earth and of hell gather around us, and we are confounded by the might and the number of our spiritual foes, who does not, in the emergency of the moment, look around him for some operative principle by which he shall tread those enemies beneath his feet? In just such an hour of conflict, in just such a moment of weakness, we "look to Jesus;" and there in His life, and in His example, we behold the reality and the power of that faith by which we ourselves, through union with Him, shall conquer our enemies and enjoy the triumphs of our reward.

2. *We look to Jesus as the immediate object upon which this faith terminates.* Faith is not simple belief. The devils believe—yea, and the devils tremble. Faith is that comprehensive act of the soul which draws upon all the departments of our spiritual nature, and gives full and formal expression to each. It is as truly the exercise of the affections as of the understanding. You remember when the eunuch said to Philip, "See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized?" how the Evangelist replied, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." And you remember the testimony of Paul in the tenth of Romans: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Faith is not simple belief

in verbal statements respecting an historic person; but it is the love which the heart gives to that person, and the trust with which the spirit goes out and leans upon him.

Throughout the Scriptures the Lord Jesus is presented to us as the immediate object of our faith. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," is the one and only direction which the New Testament gives to the sinner. "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Jesus Christ in His mediatorial person—uniting in Himself the divine and the human natures—Jesus Christ the Mediator, as He discharges the three-fold office of Prophet, Priest and King to His Church—Jesus Christ in His person, Jesus Christ in His work, is the immediate object of Christian faith—God in Christ, not imputing our trespasses unto us. Why, my hearers, the first necessity of the sinner is *pardon;* for all else is vain as a gift, until you say to him, "There is therefore now no condemnation." This pardon comes from Jesus Christ, by virtue of the perfect satisfaction which He has rendered to justice and to law; for "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Then the sinner needs the *new birth;* and this comes through the agency of the Holy Ghost, under the seal and commission of Jesus Christ, as He breathes into us the breath of spiritual life and makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus. Then the new born soul needs *holiness;* which is accomplished within us as that Spirit conforms us to the image of our blessed Lord, and works in us all the graces which adorn our experience. Then the sanctified believer requires his *rest* and his *home* in heaven; and the glory of that heaven is simply sharing in the reward of Jesus Christ, our Lord. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou gavest me." Ah! that I could put this forth with the power of a new revelation! As I utter it, may the Comforter, who takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us, by His special illlumination, make it to you and to me a new revelation! My Christian brethren, all our discomfort and weakness arise from the fact that we are groping in our own experience to find that upon which we can lean for comfort; and our only escape from this darkness is to look away to Jesus, who is the immediate and the alone object of our faith. It is just this which makes conversion so hard to the sinner, that he will not look to Jesus; but goes about, and goes about, to establish his own righteousness, and does not submit himself to the righteousness of God. It is because he will strive to deal with God as the God of law, to compound with infinite justice, and,

through acts of self-righteousness, to propitiate the divine favor. Then, in hours of spiritual darkness, when sin lies heavy upon the soul and an evil conscience tables against us the accusations of the broken law; in the bitter moments, when we shrink even from ourselves in the consciousness of our personal unworthiness, let us "look to Jesus" as our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding will be the benediction which that trusted Savior will pronounce upon our troubled hearts.

3. *We look to Jesus as the source from which this faith must be derived.* It is a divine gift. "No man," says the Savior, "cometh unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." And again: "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." In precise accord with this is the testimony of the Apostle in the second of Ephesians: "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." And yet, in a sense, faith is human no less than divine; for, as the act, it is ours, wrought in the due exercise of those faculties with which, as intelligent and moral beings, we are endowed; and, therefore, it is human. Faith, viewed in itself, is our act; and yet the power of acting comes from the divine life which the Holy Ghost implants in the soul. Our natural condition, as sinners, is one of spiritual death. Can the dead move? The thunders of heaven may roll over their grave and cannon may boom above them, and stir not a pulse. And so they who are spiritually dead—for it is no metaphor, but the utterance of a literal fact—they who are spiritually dead are incapable of spiritual motion; and you may call through all eternity over their graves, and they shall never come forth, except a life-giving power accompany the word, as in the case of Lazarus. But the very instant the Holy Ghost, the Quickener, breathes into them the breath of spiritual life, the first act, and the first evidence, of that spiritual life is faith; just as the first act and the first evidence of natural life is our breath. The first act of the new-born infant is to breathe in the air of the world into which it is introduced, with that sense of pain which brings forth its first peculiar cry. So faith, which by this analogy, may be called the breath of the soul, is both the evidence of the spiritual life, and the instrument and the means by which that life shall be perpetuated.

But if the Holy Ghost imparts spiritual life to the sinner, whence does He derive it? Is it a purely divine life, such as exists in the Holy Ghost by the necessity of His own nature as the third Person of the Godhead? Is it *this* life which is breathed into the soul dead in its

sins? Or is it, rather, that spiritual life which man forfeited by his fall? Is it not the life of holiness in which man was originally created, when God formed him in His own image and after His own likeness, and placed him under trial in the garden of delights? Is it not the life which Jesus Christ has bought back from the law, and which was held beneath its penalty? Having purchased this life, through His own vicarious death, He now treasures it up in Himself; that, as the trustee of the same, He may communicate it to all His redeemed, through the agency of the Holy Ghost. See how perfectly correlated are the offices of the Spirit and of the Redeemer; when the Quickener Himself takes the life from the treasury in which it is stored, the person of our divine Lord, and breathes it into us. Thus it is that Jesus Christ becomes the source of our spiritual life, and therefore the source of the faith which is the sign and evidence of that life.

By this faith, also, we cling to Him, and draw evermore our supplies of life. A communication being established, through the Holy Ghost with Jesus in whom this life is stored, what do we, all our days, but simply drink in the life, so that it flows through our souls and makes them alive and strong? Christ Jesus, then, is the source from which this faith is derived; and in our hours of weakness we must "look to Jesus" for the strength by which we are to run this Christian race and lay hold upon the crown which He will finally adjudge.

4. *We look to Jesus because His victory is the surety pledge of ours.* The victory of Jesus Christ was not merely a symbol, illustrating to us the nature of the success we are to achieve; nor was it only an illustration, of the method, by which that success shall be accomplished. But Christ's victory potentially includes ours, and, therefore, absolutely secures it. There never was an instant in which Jesus Christ was a private person, existing alone for Himself: He always sustained official relations, and was a public head. All that He did, He did as a Representative and a Head, and for those who were constituted His spiritual seed. He lived, died and rose again for us. He obeyed, suffered and ascended to heaven for us. "I go to prepare a place for you." All that Jesus did when here upon the earth, He did for us; and, therefore, all His is ours, just as all ours is His. No disposition can be made of what Jesus Christ accomplished, except to reckon it to His seed for their complete salvation.

Oh! the sweetness of the thought, if these cold hearts of ours could only take it in, that in all the spiritual conflict it is Christ who renews His old temptations in us, passes through His old conflicts in us, and

secures His old triumphs in us; and in all our fighting, and in all our victory, we only repeat and reproduce within ourselves what has already been accomplished for us by our blessed Head and Master. Where is the chance of failure to the weakest of the Lord's seed, when it is the Lord Himself within him who meets the tempter at every stage and overthrows him; battles against every sin and extinguishes it; and who carries him, by His power, to the victory which is so secure? In times of deep despondency and gloom, when we mourn over the darkness of our evidences, and fear that our foes will yet triumph over us, we have only to "look to Jesus" in the splendor of His triumph, and feel that His victory was ours. Having conquered for us, the prize is secure; He will carry us safely to the end of our race, and at last wreathe our brow with the laurels of triumph.

5. This brings me, in the last place, to say that *we "look to Jesus" as the final rewarder, distributing to us the prize which we shall at last achieve.* Among the ancient Greeks, the judge of the race was one who had previously been conqueror in it. No stranger to the conflict was ever assigned to that post of honor. The man who had strained every sinew in the race, and whose own brow had been crowned with the wreath, was alone competent to adjudge success or defeat to the contestants. And so, Christ Jesus, having run the race, Himself the protagonist in this mighty contest, becomes the leader of the whole army of the faithful, from Abel down to the very last son of Adam who shall trust in His grace. He who is not only the author, but also the finisher or perfecter of this faith, is, besides, the final judge, presides at the goal, and holds out the crown which He will bestow upon all those who are worthy. I have already recited the testimony which proves it· "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." Yes, Jesus is not only the rewarder, but Himself the reward. The glory of that temple which has no need of the light of the sun or of the moon, is that the Lamb is the light thereof. This blessed Lord of ours, the head of all principality and power, and of every name that is named in heaven above or upon the earth beneath, the leader of those mighty hosts which no man hath numbered or can number, who swell the anthem of praise and joy in the upper sanctuary —He gathers upon Himself, as upon a splended mirror, the whole glory of God and of the law; and so reflects it that all heaven is filled with the light of the glory of the Lamb. If God's grace shall secure our entrance into that kingdom, we shall find that Jesus Himself is the portion of the soul—God revealing Himself to us there, as He does here

in Jesus Christ—God, in the infinitude of His perfections, pouring His graces over into us, through Jesus Christ, in whom we stand before Him. This Jesus, "whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory"—He will make us joint-heirs with Himself, and fill us with His own joy forever.

In these five senses, then, do we look to Jesus—as the exemplar of the faith which we are to practice; as the immediate object upon which that faith terminates; as the original source from which this faith is derived; as securing, in His victory, our final triumph; and as being Himself the Rewarder and the reward. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." I have a two-fold and somewhat special application to make of these thoughts:

In the first place, to those of God's dear children who go mourning all their days, hanging their heads like the bulrush, and crying, "My leanness, my leanness." My brother, your mistake is that you do not look to Jesus with the constancy, with the perfect simplicity of trust, which He demands. Hence it is that you water your couch with tears, and the way through which you walk is a way covered with clouds. Let me say to you, in all your darkness look to Jesus. Let this be the posy which you engrave upon the ring by which you are espoused to Jesus as His precious bride, "Looking to Jesus." Write it is as the motto upon the book which records the experiences of your earthly life—"Looking to Jesus." Bring within one this direction all other directions; and simply, with the steadfastness with which the needle points to the pole, let your faith point to Jesus There is the mariner's compass: you may turn it around with your finger, and it will oscillate from the disturbance which you have created, but at length it will lie still and point to the north. So, whatever be the disturbances which come to you from the temptations of the world and from your own besetting sins, let your faith, magnetized by the power of grace, look to Jesus. In your ignorance, look to His wisdom; in your weakness, to His strength; in your sorrow, to His joy. When "all his waves and his billows go over you, and deep calleth unto deep at the noise of his water spouts," look to "the man of sorrows" who "bore your griefs and carried your sorrows," and has broken the points of them all off in His own suffering breast. He, as the Elder Brother, will throw around you the arms of His protection and His love, and bear you safely to the end. Let the things that are shaken, shake; let the earth that is made be, removed:

but in the Lord Jehovah let us trust. There is no trouble which should break a Christian heart; no toil, which should exhaust a Christian's strength; no temptation, which should overmaster a Christian's faith; no adversary, though he come from the bowels of hell, that should arrest the believer's triumph, as he looks to Jesus who has assured his victory in His own. My brother, it is the panacea of all your cares, it is the balm of all your wounds, it is the tonic in all your weakness, to look to Jesus from the beginning even to the end of your race. Did you ever see a Christian die? The last thing that he did was to believe. The last word that fell from his lips was to say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have commiited unto him against that day." In the moment of the new birth, we begin our career by trusting; and the last thing we do, when we are going up into the glory, is to trust. The last look which the soul takes, when it is transfigured into the perfect image of its Lord, is a look upon the Crucified One. Take down your harp from the willows, and pursue your journey with song and with laughter. Let strength come this day, through this poor utterance of mine as it interprets God's word to you, strengthening your ankle bones and enabling you, like the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple, to go on your way "leaping and praising God." All you have to do is to look, at every stage of your experience, to Jesus, and you shall come off conqueror, and more than conqueror, through Him that loved you.

Again, there are some serious, earnest, thoughtful, perhaps converted people, who stand a long time waiting at the door of the church, looking through the porch into the recesses within, longing and longing to enter. Hear their cry: "Oh! that I could only know that I would persevere to the end; that I could only have assurance given me now that I would not find a Christian profession a yoke of bondage too hard for me to bear. Oh! that I could ascertain, before I take up the solemn responsibilities, that I would not dishonor that profession by backsliding, or apostasy, or coldness, in the service of my Master." My friend, you may wait there an eternity, in just that frame; for it is not God's way to give any man, at the start, a stock of grace upon which he can bank in his own name and on his own account. It is a great deal better. The Lord Jesus, in the kingdom of His glory, is our banker; and this Book—look at it as I turn over its pages before you—I tell you that from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, this Book is neither more nor less than a book of checks drawn out in the name of the eternal Father, and countersigned and endorsed by our divine Head;

and you may tear off from these leaves, in all the emergencies of your spiritual life, the checks by and through which you may draw with perfect security upon the capital in this bank, which you have not so much as the trouble to take the care of. What do you want better than this in the way of security? "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be." "Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." And so Peter came out of his cursing and of his open and profane denial of his Lord, to say, in that Lord's presence, "Thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee."

My friend, it is not God's way, in any of His dealings with us, to accumulate beforehand all that we shall need to draw upon and exhaust. How does He give you your life? Does He give it to you in bulk? or does He measure it out to you by the inch? Each breath is a life. It is too solemn and precious a trust to be committed at once to a being so weak as man. It is the unalterable prerogative of God alone to have life in Himself. Creature-life, from the loftiest archangel in heaven to the smallest mote in the sunbeam, is contingent and derived. It is measured out to us by the beating of our pulse, by the throb of our heart, by the breathing of our lungs. And yet the great Life Giver, who has built this curious frame and put in it these marvellous works, makes them perform their parts until His end with us is achieved. How is it with regard to the productions of the field? Does God, in any single season, give food enough to the earth to feed it for a century? Or must each spring find us breaking up the fallow ground and putting in the seed, and each harvest gathering the ripened grain? Does not God hang out in the rainbow that overarches the sky, the promise that seedtime and harvest shall succeed each other until the end shall come? Just so with grace—little by little, little by little, just as you need it, no more, no less, but always enough—enough for every trial, enough for every temptation, enough for every duty—"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." Accept the law; take up the duty of the present moment, and leave God to the fulfilment of His promise in the communication to you of grace in each succeeding moment.

Here is a man who undertakes a journey of a thousand miles. Why does he not start? "I am waiting until I shall have the vigor in these limbs of mine, with one grand step to pass over the interval and be there." How long shall he wait before the journey is begun? Only four and twenty inches can he cover by a single stride, but each stride

shall have its own moment in which to make it. And these strides, each of four and twenty inches, repeated often enough, will compass the thousand miles. You remember the story of the clock that amused your infancy: when the growling pendulum complained that the lazy face had nothing to do but look out upon all that was passing in the room, and be amused; whilst it was shut up in a box, and had to swing and swing and swing. And then it began to calculate: a second for a swing, sixty seconds in a minute, sixty minutes in a hour; multiplied by twenty-four, so many swings in a day; multiplied by seven, the days of the week, so many in a week; and so many in a month, and so many in a year; until the accumulated figures lay upon the heart of the poor, suffering pendulum, that it could not work, and it stopped. But the kind explanation came, and set all right again: it swings only over a given are in a given time, each swing having its moment in which to make it. Brethren, there is no other way of running the Christian race but just that; and your testimony must be like Paul's: "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Trust to this law of faith, and to this life of faith as it is treasured in your precious Lord—and begin.

XX.

THE LAW OF LIBERTY.

JAMES ii, 12:—"*So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.*"

This passage beautifully illustrates that feature of Scripture teaching by which, out of the bosom of simple precepts, there emerges some great comprehensive principle which implicitly contains them all, and which is universal in its sweep and manifold in its application. James, the most directly practical writer of the New Testament, rebukes in this chapter the unwarrantable favoritism which, in the Church of God, distributes unequally its rewards and its censures to the rich and to the poor; and he proceeds to cut off the various pleas by which this is extenuated. If, for example, it be urged that the offence is trivial, turning upon a point altogether minor, James shows the *unity* of the law. It is one, in the authority by which it is imposed; it is one, in the spirit of obedience which it requires; and, therefore, the infraction of a single precept becomes the transgression of the whole. If, again, it be urged that this violation of law cannot be charged upon such as are in a state of grace: then James replies, in the text, that we cannot avail ourselves of the privileges of the Gospel state without, at the same time, recognizing its responsibilities. "If the law of Christ," says he, "be a law of liberty, it is still a *law*, and by it ye shall be judged." Thus he succeeds in wresting the plea of the antinomian objector, and converts it into an argument for more strict and conscientious obedience to the law of God.

I. Our attention is first challenged by THE SEEMING PARADOX IN THE LANGUAGE WHICH IS EMPLOYED—"the law of liberty:" a paradox which springs simply out of the unfortunate associations which we have with the terms employed. It so happens that our ideas of law are chiefly derived from human governments, which are defective in two respects. The law which they administer, takes cognizance only of external actions; and has no power to press behind these, and scrutinize the spirit in which obedience is rendered. Then, again, human law

never proclaims that which is, simply and of itself, right to the individual as he stands apart and by himself; but contemplates him as a member of society. Being thus in association with others, he is compelled to the surrender, in some degree, of individual privileges for the common good. Thus law comes to represent to us the notion of restraint; and seems, in every instance, to involve an abridgement of natural liberty. But if you could conceive of a law which is absolutely *perfect*—that is to say, a law which should state infallibly and simply what is, in itself, *right;* and if you could conceive of subjects under that law, whose natures are perfectly conformed to all its requisitions: then the friction to which I have just alluded, between the law and the will which renders obedience to it, would be removed. In other words, I have somewhat sharply drawn before you the distinction between *liberty* and *licentiousness:* the first term indicating action which is in conformity with rule; the second, indicating action which is inconsatnt and unregulated. The only liberty which you can ascribe to any creature of God, is the power which it has of acting agreeably to the properties of its own nature; and the measure of its freedom is the law which is prescribed to that nature, and by which alone you can know it is a *nature* at all. So that, where the nature of the creature harmonizes with the requirements of the law, the law ceases to be a restraint, and becomes simply a directory or a guide; and the law which guides is, at the same time, the exact measure of the freedom which the creature enjoys.

But let me take this matter altogether out of the region of metaphysical subtlety, in the use of two or three plain and ascending illustrations; which I hope will make it intelligible even to the most untrained mind in this assembly. Here is the mariner's compass: a slender needle, powerfully magnetized, is hung exactly upon its centre, and exquisitely balanced upon the pivot, which is so adjusted as to avoid friction to the utmost degree; all the arrangements being designed to leave the needle unembarrassed by any disturbing force. Now this needle, left to itself, rests quietly in the magnetic meridian, and points always to the north. Why? Because, being left to itself, it obeys that law of polarity which controls its movements. You take your finger and turn this needle around on its pivot; it is no longer free, because you have introduced a force which is superior to that secret power with which the needle is endowed, and which, as its law, both directs and measures the freedom of its action. You remove the finger, and the needle oscillates back and forth until this disturbing force is entirely expended; and again, in obedience to the great law which is assigned to it, the needle rests where it did before,

and points directly to the north. Here, you perceive, there is the utmost liberty of movement; but that liberty could never be ascertained to you, and never could be measured in its degree, but by the law under which it acts.

Rise now to a higher plane, into the region of animal life. Here is a bird, enclosed in a cage. It dashes its breast against the wires; it is not free. You open the door of its prison; it mounts aloft upon the wing, and throws back upon you its song of joy from the air in which it soars. It is free; because, restored to its own element, it has power to act according to its own instincts; and the song which it carols in its flight is rendered in obedience to the law of its nature, just as truly as the wing beating the air causes it, under the operation of mechanical laws, to ascend out of your sight. Here, again, you have freedom in the bird ascertained to you, and measured in its degree, by the law which God from the beginning imposed upon its nature.

Rise one step higher, into the sphere of the intellectual and moral, and you find man: a being endowed with *reason*, having *truth* for its law—a being endowed with *heart*, having *good* for its law—a being endowed with *conscience*, having *right* for its law—a being endowed with will, the purely executive faculty, whose determinations are formed under the power of motives which impel it. Here, then, is man, with reason, affections, conscience and will: and he is free, just so long as the nature which God gives him is left to obey the law of *truth*, the law of *good*, and the law of *right*. But if, from what cause soever, prejudices warp the mind, the man becomes the *slave of error;* if passions corrupt the heart, he is the *slave of lust;* if conscience be defiled, he is the *slave of guilt*. When he is bound by these three-fold cords—of error, passion and guilt—you have pictured before you that "bondage of corruption," that "law of sin in the members," of which the Scriptures make such frequent mention, and which Paul describes with such terrible emphasis in his epistle to the Romans.

The terms, therefore, law and liberty, are not contradictory; indeed, so far from being antagonistic, they are exactly correlative. There can be no liberty, except there be also a law which defines and measures it. If, for example, a man could be removed outside of all moral relations, there would be no sphere of moral activity—and it would be an abuse of language to call him *free*. His moral faculties would be so shut up within themselves, with no opportunity to act themselves out, that there would be no propriety in the application to him of such a term. It may cost a little effort to imagine the case which I have supposed. I do not

mean that you shall carry a man into the desert of Sahara, or lock him up in the cell of a hermit, and so isolate him entirely from his own race. In that case, you have only removed him outside of merely human relations; you have left still unimpaired his relations to God. But blot out *all* his moral relations, towards God as well as man—cancel every law by which, in these relations, his nature is directed—blot out the *truth* so that his reason shall not turn to that—blot out the *good*, so that its enjoyment shall not be the law of his heart—blot out the *right*, so that it shall not be a law to his conscience—and there will be no freedom, because there is no possibility of action. It is just the same as if you had placed him in an exhausted receiver. The lungs and heart are all in place; but these vital organs suspend their functions, when under conditions in which it is impossible for them to act. So if you take a man out of all moral relations, and remove from him the pressure of obligations, you have left no sphere for the exercise of any of his moral powers. You have put him under an exhausted receiver, and he dies morally and spiritually. You must replace him in relations where his activities may have play—and that is to say nothing less, than you must replace him under law which shall direct the movements of his nature. Exemption, then, from rule is not liberty, but licentiousness: which in politics we denominate Agrarianism—in social economics, Fourierism—in religion, Antinomianism.

II. We are now prepared to consider, IN WHAT RESPECTS THE GOSPEL IS THUS A LAW OF LIBERTY TO THE CHRISTIAN. The term is peculiar to the Scripture. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." The rest which the Savior promises His people, not being exemption from duty; but consisting in bearing a yoke which is easy, and sustaining a burden which is light. "Ye shall know the truth," says Christ, "and the truth shall make you free"—where all the freedom that Christ promises to His children, is to be found in obedience to that truth which His Spirit reveals to them. "I will walk at liberty," says the Psalmist, "for I seek thy precepts"—the precepts being the orbit in which the free obedience of the Christian moves. "Brethren," says the Apostle, writing to the Galatians, "ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another"—where, again, liberty is perfectly coincident with service. "Whoso looketh," says James, "into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be

blessed in his deed"—where the law is described not only as the law of liberty, but it is expressly affirmed that we must continue in it; not only hearing, but doing the things which the word enjoins. And if you choose to turn to the sixth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans, you find the thought running, as a chain, through the entire chapter: "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." There is no freedom, therefore, in the kingdom of God, and from the nature of things there can be none, in which service is not distinctly involved. Just like the ballast of a ship, steadying it upon its keel, causing it to sit all the more firmly upon the waters, so that it shall more easily obey the helm which guides it; just like the body of a bird, which gives to it the needful weight, so that it shall breast the air currents and be borne steadily upon its wing wherever its instinct shall point: just so this law of God lodges in us this obligation, which weights and ballasts us, so that we sit securely and firmly in the midst of our duties, and, as directed by the Spirit of God, render obedience to His blessed will.

In what respects, then, is this Gospel a law of liberty to the Christian? To which I answer—

1. *Because the penalty has been cancelled, and the law is henceforth void of condemning power.* When God gave His law to Adam, in his primeval innocence, that law presented first its precepts. When man sinned and, by transgression, was brought under the penalty, the order is reversed; and now to us, the fallen children of Adam, the law presents first its penalty. It is idle to talk of any obedience by us to the precepts of the law, until we are first delivered from the penalty in which we are involved. Exactly as with a felon condemned before a human tribunal, the law wraps its manacles and its fetters around his limbs as he lies immured in prison; just so when we break the law of God, it wraps its penalty around all the powers of our nature, and there can be no obedience rendered to the precepts until we are, in the first instance, discharged from the penalty by which we are bound.

But when the Lord Jesus Christ comes, takes the sinner's place, and endures this penalty for him, and exhausts it; when we, through the Holy Spirit, are enabled to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ as our righteousness, then there is no condemnation. "There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." The law, being to the justified believer no longer an instrument of justification, is obeyed, not through slavish dread, not for wages or reward, but becomes simply the law of rectitude,

to order our behavior aright before God, and the complete measure of our advancing sanctification.

2. *The Gospel is a law of liberty, because the obedience to it is perfectly unconstrained and free.* Obedience which is not voluntary, is a solecism. The essence of obedience consists in the consent, rendered by moral and accountable beings, to the virtue which resides in the law. Strip this off, and you have only an external obedience to the mere letter of the law; which is, in the sight of God, of no sort of value. Now this law, administered as it is by Jesus Christ the Mediator, through the grace which He imparts, is obeyed with feelings of delight by the Christian; and this delight makes the obedience free.

Even in our lower human relations, we have beautiful illustrations of the consistency of freedom with obligation. There is not a human relation which does not involve duties; and yet we experience perfect freedom in the discharge of these obligations, simply because it is our choice. The wife, as bound by the law of her husband, recognizes her subjection to him as a duty growing out of the relation which has she assumed, and still her obedience is consciously free, because it is the election of her own loving will. So a child, endued with a filial spirit, recognizes the law of the parent and the constant obligation under which he lies to render obedience to it; but the instinct which God has placed in the heart of the child makes the obedience, although it is obligatory, at the same time free. His own choice has embraced the duty, and it becomes the homage of his own free will. Thus, my hearers, the obedience which the Christian pays to the law of God, because it is his choice to render it, is a free and unconstrained obedience; and the law under which he is placed, is felt to be a law of liberty.

3. *The Gospel is a law of liberty, because it is not a code of dry and arbitrary rules, but a statement of broad and comprehensive principles.* In the emergencies of life we sometimes regret that we have not precise directions given to us to meet particular exigencies. It would oftentimes be a relief, when we are in doubt as to the path of duty, if we could go to some fixed rule which exactly measures that duty to us. But, my hearers, what a loss, what a loss, if we should thus convert the Gospel of Jesus Christ into a book of Leviticus! In such a case, our obedience would be a mechanical obedience. Our freedom would be a partial freedom, because it would be restricted simply to the alternative of obeying or refusing to obey. There would be no spiritual education, no large play of the soul in the diversity of its powers. God's plan, in the Gospel, is to communicate grace, and then to map out, in leading princi-

ples, the duty which we are to perform. It is a part of our spiritual training to go into a search for these principles, and then to learn how, in each case, to make the application of them. Just as the parent eagle throws the young eaglet out upon the air, that it may try its wings, and then swoops beneath it and catches it in its fall; so it is, our blessed Head throws us out to ascertain our duty, revealing to us the general principles by which our conduct is to be regulated. No small part of our education for heaven consists in learning these from the Word, and in rightly applying them to the circumstances under which we are placed. Just, then, because the Gospel is not a code of morals, but a statement of principles which we are left to gather up and apply, it becomes, according to the declaration of the Apostle in the text, a law of liberty: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."

4. *The entire harmony and fulness of communion which we enjoy with God, our Father, makes this law a law of liberty.* The peculiarity of the Gospel is that it communicates life; and this life, which is imparted by the Holy Spirit, works itself out according to its own law, and evinces itself in the fellowship which we have with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. Being legally adopted into His family, being actually quickened into spiritual life in the new birth of the Holy Ghost, being by faith spiritually united with the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal and only begotten Son, we are, in every possible sense of the term, God's children. We are God's children by virtue of our adoption—legally such. We are God's children by a veritable birth, born into His family precisely as we are born into the human family. As we become the children of men by natural birth, so, in precise analogy with this, there is a gracious, spiritual birth, by the power of the Quickener Himself, who comes and breathes into the dead soul the principle of spiritual life, and thus we are actually born into the family of God. Then, to make the case strong by a three-fold cord, there is the eternal and only begotten Son dwelling in the bosom of the Father, having a supreme claim to the title of Son; who receives us into a mystical but real union with Himself, through which we become the sons of God.

Ah! Christianity is a power, it is a life; it is not simply a code of morals. And there is your grand mistake, legalist, when you undertake, in your own strength, to render obedience to this law, and carry it up to God as the ground of your justification. God, in the Gospel of His Son, comes, and, in the first instance, communicates to you the very life in which this obedience is to be rendered; and the first evidence of that life

is the fellowship you have with God, as your Father, and with Jesus Christ, as your Elder Brother. Now, the perfect harmony and fulness of this communion with God, the blessed intercourse which we maintain with Him through Christ, makes our obedience a joy. So far from being a law imposing its hard restraints, and abridging any of the liberties from which we part with reluctance, this communion with our Father and our King makes the law under which we are placed one which it is a pleasure to obey—it is to us a law of liberty.

III. We come now to consider THE USE WHICH THE APOSTLE MAKES OF THIS DOCTRINE, IN REPESENTING THE INCREASED OBLIGATIONS TO CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." The principle assumed evidently is this: that privileges and responsibilities are exactly commensurate. Certainly I need not argue the proposition. Your own sense of equity makes the admission, upon the statement of it—that privileges upon the one hand, and obligations upon the other, are precisely commensurate. Why, it is a great moral equation, which the conscience and the reason both unite in recognizing and in affirming. It is only necessary to look at some of the particulars in which the obligation is increased, to obey a law which is to us a law of liberty.

1. I start, then, from the general level and the lowest—that *our original responsibilities, as creatures under the divine law, remain unabated.* This strikes at the root of antinomianism. The law, considered as a RULE, never can be repealed. As the eternal standard of rectitude, as the directory and guide which God has given to the creatures whom He has made in His own image, the law cannot be abrogated. This need not be largely discussed here. As I have already urged, the law is a necessary condition of moral agency, without which there can be no sphere of moral activities—and for this reason it can never be repealed. It is the permanent transcript of the divine character; and, as grounded upon this, the infallible interpreter of the divine claims—and for this reason it cannot be cancelled. While God lives, so long must the law abide as the reflection of His perfect and blessed image. It defines the relations of the creature, and all the relations growing out of these—so that the destruction of the law must be preceded by the annihilation of every being who stands in any moral relation to the Creator. And, finally, it is necessary to man as the standard and guide of his nature. It is a partial view to regard the law as merely the directory of our acts. Antecedent to all these, it is the guide to our nature—showing us what this ought to be, as the source and spring from which all proper obedi-

ence must flow. For this reason the law must remain with its binding force, over all beings in all worlds, under every conceivable condition or state, whether of holiness or sin, condemnation or grace.

2. *There are the superadded obligations of redemption.* "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." [II Corinthians vi, 20.] "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." [I Peter i, 18, 19.] Ah! brethren, if, as creatures originally made in God's image, we owe obedience, how much more when we have been redeemed and brought under the law of love and the pressure of gratitude. The greatness of the purchase measures the extent of the Redeemer's claims. By just so much as the price is incalculable with which we have been redeemed, just so large is the extent of the Redeemer's claims upon our obedience.

3. *We owe the closer obedience to this law of liberty, because of our assumption of it through our own choice.* I do not put this as the original foundation of duty, because this is not a matter of contract. Our duty to God grows out of our relations with Him; and the instant the relation is formed the duty binds, whether we recognize it or not. But the acknowledgement of duty on our part, carries with it an additional binding force; and through it we confess judgment beforehand, as to all those claims, in case of failure. Why when a customer from the country buys a bill of goods from any merchant in this city, it is the *purchase* that makes the debt. The note which he gives, pledging to pay at sixty or ninety days, does not create the debt, but is the acknowledgement of it: in law held to be specially binding, because it is the confession under his own signature and seal of the existence of the claim. Just so we come under bonds to God, because we choose this law as that under which we live, and assume the obligations which devolve upon us. By just so much as we have put our own choice into that matter, have we increased our responsibility.

4. *The complete rectification of our nature and the co-ordination of all our faculties in the obedience which is rendered, make the case stronger.* Look at the points. Every faculty, through grace, is repaired. The understanding is enlightened, the affections are purged, the conscience is pacified, the will is subdued; and thus whatever disability we, as sinners, lay under, is cancelled. Does not this increase our obligation? Then, these faculties are distinctly co-ordinated. As God made man,

the understanding was intended to be the leading faculty, to go in the front and see the path in which the creature is to walk. Then the affections follow after, and embrace that which the understanding sees. And, finally, the will comes in, as the executive faculty, and chooses that which the mind perceived to be true, and which the heart acknowledged to be good. This is the original order in which these faculties stood, when implanted within us by the great Creator. I need not tell you how by sin this order is reversed: how all the temptations, which assail us in life, are addressed to the affections or to the fancy, and never, in the first instance, to the judgment or the reason. It is only when the affections have been gained that the tempter seduces, by false pleas, the understanding, as a conspirator with the heart, which subdue and control the will. But when grace restores these powers to their proper order, and infuses into them the life of holiness, surely our obligation to obedience is proportionately increased.

5. Last of all, *the splendid honors and rewards, which are set before us in the kingdom of glory, strengthen the obligation to render obedience to Christ's law of liberty.* Do you not expect the son of a king to behave worthily of his expectations? He who is to sit shortly upon the throne, and wield the sceptre over millions, ought, with the first development of his reason, to recognize the responsibilities of his position; and should bear himself with a graceful consciousness of his dignity. Certainly it is becoming to those who are the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, to live before men as the aspirants after such honors should; not committing themselves to the weak and beggarly elements of sense, but setting their affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. The prize upon which they have fastened their hopes, ennobles them; and they ought to feel the grandeur of their relationship with God and walk worthy of the vocation to which they are called.

In every point of view the obligation of the Christian to render obedience to the law of Jesus Christ, is all the stronger, because it is to him a "law of liberty."

I close this discussion with a single remark. Brethren, the duty of personal holiness is placed upon its highest ground, when it is seen to be obligatory alike from law and from grace. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." It is an appeal to all that is generous and noble in the human soul. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." [Romans vi, 14, 18.] Because the Master places you under the

"law of liberty," feel the increased obligation to obedience; and let the law, which measures to you the degree of your liberty, measure, at the same time, the extent of your obligations. Law and grace unite, in the text, to enjoin upon the Christian the most hearty and constant obedience to the law of Jesus Christ.

And finally, my hearers, the Gospel must be accepted or rejected exactly as it is offered to us. There is no power on earth which can legislate in reference to it. No pope, no council, no body of men, however sacred in position or character, has power to change this Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ by one iota. There cannot be the obliteration of one diacritical mark, by which any letter of this Gospel is distinguished. It comes to you from your King, and you must either take it or cast it behind you; but you cannot change it. You cannot make the obligations greater; you cannot make them less. You cannot convert this law of Jesus Christ into anything else than "the law of liberty;" and you cannot accept it as such without, at the same time, confessing the obligations which it imposes upon your affections and upon your conscience. Let us come right to the issue. Here is the Gospel, and here are its exactions and privileges: do we accept them or do we reject them? Oh! do not strive to compromise between the two, as though that were possible! Do not seek to substitute for the close and honest obedience which this Gospel requires at your hands, that which the Judge will sternly reject when He sits upon His throne!

XXI.

COMMUNION WITH GOD, ALONE PERFECT.

REVELATIONS iii, 20:—*"If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."*

This passage is parallel with many others which may be grouped together in a class, teaching the blessedness of communion with God. For example, Christ comforts His disciples, in view of His departure from the earth, by showing that they would thereby be exalted to a superior and much closer communion with Him: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." [John xiv, 23.] So the Apostle John represents the dignity of the Christian's fellowship with the Godhead, by saying, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ." [I John i, 3.] And now the text: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me"—where, as you perceive, under the image of a banquet, which is at once the sign and the means of festive gladness amongst men, the same high privilege is represented.

Obviously, these promises, repeated under so many forms of expression and with such different degrees of emphasis, must appeal to some fixed principle in man's nature; or else they are devoid of significance. That principle is the *social*—the instinct by which every man is drawn out of his own seclusion and is merged with his fellows. I desire this morning to draw your attention to several classes of facts in reference to this element of our nature; which, though apparently in contradiction to each other, have their reconciliation in one grand conclusion, the bearing of which you will discover before the end of this discourse is reached.

I. The first fact, then, is THE EXISTENCE OF THIS SOCIAL PRINCIPLE; and what is needed of me, at this moment, is not proof, but illustration.

1. Look, then, if you please, at *the endowment of speech in man*—that wonderful faculty by which we convey our thoughts and feelings to those who are around us in life. Only during the past week, it was very acutely said by one who will recognize his thought, as I now reproduce it in my own language from his lips: I wonder that there should be any stumbling over the miracles in the Gospel, when that which we daily see in the varying phenomena of nature is quite as marvellous as anything in the miracle itself—the wonder being diminished only by their repetition. Why, my hearers, what could be more marvellous than what is taking place at this very instant? One man stands in the presence of a thousand; and, by means of certain sounds, which are intelligently combined and which fall in due order from his lips, succeeds in conveying all the thoughts with which his busy mind may teem. Not only so, he infuses into these thoughts the vigor of a mighty life; as, through the tones with which they are enounced, he conveys the emotions with which his own heart is filled. Syllable by syllable, as these sounds fall upon the ear, every person in this house becomes partaker of that one man's thought; and every bosom heaves with the agitation of his emotions. What marvellous power there is in language, by which a living mind throws out from itself a living thought; which, in the utterance, becomes incarnate, and has, as it were, a substantive and separate existence of its own! It goes travelling down the ages, living after the author of it has been dead a thousand years in his grave—touching, waking up minds that are a thousand years distant in the future, and causing them to swell with the emotions which once filled the bosom of him who pronounced it. Take what theory you please of the origin of language, there is the stupendous fact: that, by means of certain sounds, a myriad of men may be made partakers of one man's thoughts. Even this is but half of the wonder: for, by conventional and purely arbitrary symbols, we can write these thoughts and feelings upon the silent parchment; so that, as the untutored savage once poetically expressed it, even the paper itself shall have power to talk. Now, can you conceive of a being to whom God has given this marvellous faculty of speech, lifted far above the inarticulate cries of the brute, which, few in number as they are, yet seem capable of communicating somewhat to their own kind—can you conceive of a being having this marvellous endowment of language, as destined to live in a state of seclusion? Is he not, by this very faculty, marked for society?

2. Look next, if you please, at *the wonderful furniture of affections and desires, of passions and instincts, within our own breast.* David

says, in the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm, "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them"—thus expressing his wonder at the structure of the human body in the marvellous complexity of its parts; which the Christian poet, thousands of years afterwards, embalmed in the song,

"Strange that a harp of a thousand strings,
Should keep in tune so long."

And yet what is this to the wonder which fills us when we look at the structure of the human soul? Oh! if this perishing body be such a harp as Watts describes, what shall we say of the spiritual harp locked up within? over which it might seem to be an angel's province to sweep the hand, and awaken notes which should be worthy even of the ear of God.

And then those mighty passions which lie lower yet in the nature of man; with volcanic force bursting into flame, and pouring a flood of ruin! And these instincts, so marvellously like the instincts of the brute; and yet so obscure in man, because they are overmastered and brought under the control of reason and conscience! Now, take man, with this furniture of affections and emotions—emotions of surprise and gladness, of joy and sorrow, of hope and fear; with these volcanic passions, with all these instincts, as they are subordinated to reason: and then see how man is placed in the bosom of relations in which they may have the freest scope. No one is born to himself. The birth itself puts us into relations; and all through to the end, until we are caught up to the wider kinship of the skies, and find that we are brothers with the angels—we are in the midst of relationships from which we cannot be eliminated, and which God designs as the sphere in which all these elements of our nature shall be indulged. Surely, a being so constituted and so placed, is designed of God to be a member of society.

3. Look upon that unvarying law, *by which no man finds the perfection of his nature except under the pressure of social discipline.* All these powers, intellectual and moral, at which I have hinted, exist, in the first instance, as bare capacities, and lie entirely dormant in the infant: and this marvellous being, with these dormant capabilities, is put by the Creator in immediate contact with all nature without; which, as a charged battery, sends its electric shock through body and mind; waking it up from its torpor, and rousing all these sleeping powers into

intense activity and exercise. As Isaac Taylor suggestively puts it, the five bodily senses are so many gateways through which the soul goes out and walks up and down the earth, and takes possession of a world which is entirely foreign to itself. The mighty thing which we call spirit in man, looks out of the eye, comes forth with the sense of touch and of taste, and takes possession of this world of matter, extracting from every part of it that knowledge which shall be the nutriment by which it is fed. Hence education: why, what is it but educing these powers as they are originally found in man, and stimulating them and developing them; and then furnishing them, in all their strength, with the knowledge which they shall apply in after life? This is true of the moral, as well as of the intellectual and physical in man. These powers all lie dormant, until they have been stirred into action. He who retreats from his kind, and locks himself up in the isolation of his own being, will find his moral nature tottering at last into ruins; and, like some abbey of the middle ages which has fallen into decay, the lichen and the moss will cover it and indicate but the glory of what it was. Surely, if we find man put under the operation of this law, so that he only grows up in the symmetry and proportion of his parts as he is put under this discipline, he is, by the constitution of his nature, formed for society.

4. Last of all, in reference to this class of facts, look at *the innumerable guilds which men are constantly creating for themselves*, in order that they may gratify this powerful instinct of their nature. God gives to us the family, the primary society in which we move, and out of which all other societies spring; but it is not enough. We move upon the broader sphere of the State, with all its complex and marvellous interests; and it is not enough. God puts us by His grace into His Church, with all its holy activities—taking hold upon salvation with its prizes above, and the earth to be conquered and put under subjection to the authority of our ascended King and Lord; and it is not enough. We step outside of these original societies in which we are placed by the hand of the Creator, and form associations and crafts of every possible kind, in order to gratify the instinct which causes each of us to knit to his fellow. All the occupations of life form themselves into guilds, that they may express the common tastes and feelings which belong to them as a class; which are then used for purposes of protection, organizing a great interest that it may be able to compete with other interests and not be pressed to the wall.

Now, put together these specifications as I have indicated them: the

endowment of speech, the furniture of affections, passions and instincts, the law of social discipline under which our nature is perfected, and the voluntary associations into which men are drawn by affinity of interest or taste—and the evidence is complete, that such a principle as the *social* has been planted within us as one of the most controlling elements of our being.

II. Now, over against this, I set another principle, in apparent contradiction: THAT EVERY MAN IS LOCKED UP WITHIN THE LIMITS OF HIS OWN PERSONALITY—restricting the communion which he holds with others. Let us trace the evidence of this a little in detail:

1. *There is the difficulty of perfectly knowing ourselves.* This interposes a bar at the very commencement; it is the difficulty of extricating that which is to form the staple of intercommunion. What lies the nearest to us, is not always the best known. Startling as it may seem to the unreflecting, the most difficult of all knowledge is *self knowledge.* It has been so confessed by the wise of every age. You remember the motto written over the Delphic oracle of old, confronting every one who came to gather up its responses, "KNOW THYSELF:" intimating that this is the first and the comprehensive lesson which man is to learn; and, by the urgency of the exhortation, more than intimating the difficulty of achieving the task. Where on earth is to be found the being who completely knows himself? You look down upon the placid sea when its waves are rippling towards the shore—when, in the beautiful language of a recent poet, it kisses the beach, weaving with its white foam, as it were, a coronet of pearls with which to adorn the brow of its bride—and you think you know it. But do you know the sea in its reserved power, when its infuriated waves madly dash and roll against each other, and lift their mountain heads so as to hide the very stars? So we think we know ourselves in our placid moments, when life moves in its routine and we pass by quick but understood succession from feeling to feeling, as they obey the great law by which they are controlled. But how suddenly the whole nature within us is in a storm, and we are utterly unable to resolve the conflicting emotions with which the spirit is agitated! How often do men, under unusual circumstances, discover a characteristic emerging into view, of the existence of which they had not so much as dreamed! How often are we scandalized at beholding a character, which we had supposed as strong as the everlasting granite, crumbling like a bank of sand when it is subjected to temptations by which it was never tried before! Now, if there be this difficulty in perfectly understanding ourselves, how is it possible that we

can perfectly report ourselves? And if we can neither understand nor report ourselves, is there not, in this, a restriction upon the communion which we are to hold with our kind?

2. Pass from this to another thought, to which, however, I would like you to attach a degree of importance superior to that which I have just announced. I speak of *that veil of reserve which an infinitely wise and loving God has thrown over the sacred feelings of every heart*, forbidding their exposure. For one, I do thank Him for it; and that by just so much as the feelings are sacred, they are incapable of utterance. It is easy for us in society to talk about matters which concern the public; but when it comes to matters that concern ourselves and our domestic relations, who is able, without violence to the best instincts of his nature, to rend the veil of secresy and reserve which God Himself has imposed? We are not able, in the conjugal relation, to speak of the wealth of love with which our bosom is filled. We are not able, in the parental relation, or in the filial, to speak of all the love interchanged between the father and the child. Our Christian experience comes under the operation of this law, making it difficult to interpret to others the sacred exercises of the heart. If God gives us high communion with Himself, and we feel a strange joy in that fellowship, there is not the friend upon the earth to whom we can convey anything but the most meagre hint of it; and that, too, ordinarily after it has become a matter of memory, and we look back upon it with the eye of reflection. When we are passing through these exquisite experiences, whether it be the moments of rapturous communion with God or moments of darkness and shame in the closet, these are the things which we expose only to the eye of Him who looks down from the throne upon us, and which we cannot open to the gaze even of the purest and best whom we know upon earth. This is an obvious barrier to the fulness of the intercourse which man holds with his fellow here below.

3. Then look at *the inadequacy of language in conveying what we would utter*. Even if you break over the difficulties already named, and come to the purpose of telling all that you know and feel, you encounter the inadequacy of human language to convey the sentiments which you desire to express. I have before dignified language; and now I must derogate from that dignity. It is a language of convention only—a language made up of symbols and of signs. It is not that dialect which we shall understand and speak, when we reign with the immortals in the kingdom of glory. It is only such tones and such speech as can trip from a corporeal tongue, which make the language of earth. I suppose

that when we are in the world of spirit, and are in possession of a spiritual body, whose attributes we cannot comprehend here, that the soul will find a tongue which shall speak the language of the soul; and the soul will have a language which shall be adequate to the expression of the thoughts and the affections with which it teems. But here upon the earth, the spiritual in man finds itself fettered by the bonds of sense in which it is held. Why, in those moments when we are completely happy, where is the word that can tell it to anybody else? And shall I reverse the medal? Oh! in those hours of grief, when we go down into the deep and the billows break over us—when a mysterious hand stretches from above and snaps the cords which bind us to those most loved on earth—where can grief find the word in which to express the bitterness of its woe? Solomon was right when he said, "The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." Not to press the illustration too far, even in our poor attempts at sympathy, when we sit down, like the friends of Job, in the ashes with those whom God bereaves, are we not, by the necessity of the case, shut up to their silence? When we would utter the sorrow which our heart feels for their loss, the word in which we would imprison the thought is so narrow, that the sympathy would burst it into fragments if we were to speak it. If you undertook to pour the burning sentiment into any cold form of a word, the scorching heat would absolutely consume the mould in which you seek to embalm it. Hence it is, in the presence of heavy sorrow, we can only fold the hands upon the breast and be still; weeping with those that weep, and letting the mute tear express that which the tongue is utterly unable to pronounce. Thus the inadequacy of language places a limit upon the intercourse which we seek to hold with our kind.

4. Last of all, upon this point, *it is impossible to take the gauge of those with whom we desire to converse;* so as to make them our confidants, and give to them all the experiences of our hearts. If a man finds it impossible perfectly to know himself, and must bow before the Delphic motto, so full of wisdom, and feel that he never can rise to the height of the grand lesson—how is he able to take the dimensions of another man's spirit, to know how far he may go in what he shall tell? Is it not just this that makes the office of a mother so supremely difficult, and yet so supremely delicate? Is there one of that class in this assembly, who does not feel the difficulty of letting herself down completely into the intelligence and heart of her child, so as to think that child's thoughts and feel that child's feelings, and to speak to that child

with the perfectness of sympathy which only such knowledge could impart? Who, that has the care of the young, does not mourn over the infelicity that comes from outgrowing the memories of our own childhood; making it so difficult to pass the interval that separates us from them, so that we shall stand upon their plane and communicate thoughts such as they are capable of receiving, and hold them in perfect sympathy with ourselves? And yet the mother who is incapable of this, at least in a degree, is incapable of discharging an office so sacred towards the being whom God has committed to her care.

The measure of confidential communication is the feeling that we have, in some degree, taken the gauge of those with whom we converse. We cannot, in the nature of things, go in our confidence beyond what we suppose to be our understanding of the man. You measure what you relate, by what you conceive to be the character of him to whom you speak. If there be this inability perfectly to take the measure of those around us in life, see the bar which is interposed to the perfection of human intercourse.

There are, then, two classes of facts in apparent conflict: the specifitions, upon the one hand, going to show that God made man from the beginning for society, and that he must come out of himself and hold communion with his kind; and specifications of a different class, perfectly intelligible and clear, showing that man has no power to unlock wholly the door of his heart, but remains, to a certain extent, shut in within the limits of his own personality. Ah! this personality, to which God remands us, lifts its solemn protest against all that modern jugglery, under whatever name it may pass, which undertakes to strip it off, and to merge one being into any other. If there be that mysterious power given to any human being, to go down into the secresy of my mind and read there what I do not choose to express—if there be, in this world, coming from any sphere, the power to make inquisition in my breast of the emotions with which I am agitated, and which I do not choose to express—I shrink with the most intense horror from the usurpation. I turn away with the most intense fear from the tyranny which would strip me of my nature, rob me of my personality, merge my experience into that of another, and make him the master of my most secret thoughts and purposes and desires. No, my hearers, I feel that every honest man ought to put the most determined reprobation upon all this cunning craftiness, which puts on the disguise of science, in order to rob us of that which is most dear to us—ourselves, our consciousness; that which stamps us the individuals that we are, and without which we could not

be made responsible before the tribunal of the great Judge hereafter.

III. These facts, which seem to be in antagonism to each other, have their reconciliation in this: that ALL HUMAN INTERCOURSE IS INTENDED, NOT TO EXHAUST THE SOCIAL INSTINCT IN US, BUT IS SIMPLY THE TYPE OF THE FELLOWSHIP WE ARE TO HAVE WITH GOD. Not until we rise from the human plane to the divine—not until we can say, with John, "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ"—is full play given to the social nature which God has impressed upon us. This instinct finds itself restricted and hedged up, as long as it is expended upon those of our own kind and race. But when we rise to communion with God, of which this is the type, all the difficulties are swept away. Is not the great God able to read without conventional symbols? Are we obliged to use the alphabet and put the letters into words, to tell Him anything? Ah! my brethren, here is the glory and privilege of prayer; that we kneel down before God in secret, and He reads the groans that are unutterable. His omniscient eye traces thoughts, desires and affections as they arise, and there is no need of speech at all. In like manner He, who can look down into the soul itself and read unerringly all the feelings with which it is agitated, is able, by His blessed Spirit, to impress His truth directly upon the mind and fill it with the knowledge of Himself. Thus the intercourse, which is so barred when we seek to hold it with each other, is perfectly free and unconstrained when we have it with God.

Were human fellowship more perfect than I have described, it would be easy to show that it cannot exhaust the longings of man's nature. Consider

1. *The endless power of growth in the mind.* What limit can be assigned to its expansion? Does not this imply the infinite in God, as the subject of its study throughout eternity? Boundless as the field of investigation may seem on earth, it is still within the sphere of the finite. No form of knowledge fully satisfies, but whets the desire to penetrate the unknown. Were the created universe at length compassed in our thought, we should only find that we had outgrown its measure, and would still sigh for the uncreated and eternal. Only God Himself can be the portion of the soul, and fellowship with Him can alone exhaust its power of communion. All intercourse below this points upward to the society of the Godhead, in which the incomplete and typical fellowships of earth find their fulfilment at last.

2. There is, again, *that peculiarity of the affections, by which they are not parcelled out to many objects, but the whole is given to each.* I

will not expand this principle here, upon which I had occasion to enlarge in a previous discourse.* But after filling all human relations with our love, the heart remains in its undiminished force to be given to God. Like the majestic river which, in its descent to the sea, sends off its streams to water a continent, and gathers them back again into its own bosom after they have fertilized a thousand plains; so our affections, though distributed through society and clothing its face with verdure, can only be taken up at last in the infinite and ever blessed Jehovah. If the expanding mind can rest alone upon *absolute truth* as it is found in God, the undivided heart can vest its wealth of love only as in Him it finds the *absolute good.* In both alike, the imperfect experience in the earthly sphere forms but the type of what shall be realized in the heavenly.

3. Observe, too, *the concrete form which thought and feeling tend to assume in decisions and acts of the will.* I cannot dwell upon this important fact further than to say, that it finds its complete representation only in the perpetual *worship* of God, here and hereafter. How wonderful, that every part of our nature should thus have a prophet's voice to speak to us of God! The mind, in its thinking, finds repose only in God, who is the supreme reason. The heart, in its loving, finds contentment only in God, who is the supreme good. And when these crystallize in the acts of the will and of the life, lo, the activities of our nature empty themselves in the worship which comprehends them all—itself the supreme act, into which the whole nature pours itself as the fullest expression of its united powers. Who then, but God, can satisfy the human soul in its longing after fellowship and love? and what a chord should be touched within us as we read the promise, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me!"

IV. But just here comes a new entanglement. Whilst God impresses the evidence of His being everywhere, we have no bodily sense with which to see and identify Him. When out of the deeps within us these aspirations lift themselves after the eternal, the infinite, the good and the true, we are driven back by our sense of guilt—shrinking from the presence which we seek, because we dread the contact with His ineffable purity and holiness. What then? Shall the social instinct in man point to fellowship with God, as the only sphere where it can be satisfied, to find itself thus shut out from that communion forever? Oh! my hearers, shall I lead you, by these utterances, to the brink of a precipice only that you may gaze over its beetling brow, and then draw

*See No. 5 in this series of sermons.

back in the fright and amazement of your souls? No: rather let me open this Gospel and show you how, in the work of the adorable Redeemer, the provisions are perfect for enabling man to hold communion with his God. Yet the warning of the clock compels me to shut down upon the very points which I desired to expand. I must, therefore, count rapidly upon my fingers what I would like to expound at length, if time allowed.

In the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God makes a perfect revelation of Himself. The spiritual, infinite, eternal Jehovah comes and stands upon our own platform, appears before us in our own nature, clothes Himself with all the affections and sensibilities of man; and, with a human voice and a human tongue and a human heart, speaks to us those immense realities which the Revealer lifts out of the abysses of the Godhead. See how, in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, who comes from the bosom of the Father to reveal the Godhead—and to reveal Him in such form as that we upon earth shall in a measure comprehend it—provision is made for the completeness of our intercourse with God.

Then shall I tell you how *Jesus Christ, being more than a Revealer, is a Redeemer too;* and, in His redeeming work, *has swept out of the way all the legal obstructions to our intercourse with God?* Sin! Shall that bar us from conversing with our Father in heaven? He takes the sin and casts it into the depths of the sea, and it is remembered against us no more forever. Does the law lift its front across our path and say, "The soul that sinneth it shall die?" "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." This and every other obstacle to the believer's open fellowship with his Father in heaven, this glorious Redeemer has forever taken out of the way.

Shall I dwell upon this? Or shall I pass, touching the third finger to *the office of the Holy Ghost within us*, as the interpreter of Jesus Christ? It is His office to bring to our remembrance all that Jesus ever said or did; with His quickening power, opening the mind so that it shall look out upon the truth and drink it in; laying His hand upon these affections, and training them all to the love and service of God; dwelling in these hearts of ours, and interpreting to us the whole Gospel of our blessed Lord.

And, then, shall I touch the fourth finger, and tell you *how, in the end, we are to be transfigured and lifted up to heaven, where we shall see and know, even as we ourselves are known?* Faith is the law of this dispensation, because we are here under trial; but knowledge is the law

of heaven, because that is the dispensation of reward and of glory. There, with spiritual eyes, we shall look upon the throne of our God and behold the face of our Father. We shall behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ in heaven above, as on earth below; and we shall be changed into that image upon which we look, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity:" because the other two are absorbed and disappear. Faith is superseded by sight; we shall see, face to face, the very glories which shall be made our reward. And hope is lost in the eternal enjoyment of that which is grasped by anticipation. Of this trinity of graces, only love, the eternal bond, like the great law which binds all the atoms of the material universe together—only love shall remain to hold us in eternal union with our blessed Head, and, through Him, in eternal communion with His blessed Father.

Thus, my hearers, the social instinct, which finds itself repressed and hampered upon earth, points as a sign to the skies and to the intercourse that we are to have with God; beginning in the disclosures of grace here, and ending in the fuller revelations of glory hereafter. What a privilege does the child of God enjoy—the only being on earth who finds verge and scope for the play of his whole nature! The unconverted man is manacled and fettered. He has instincts within him which are irrepressible; and yet, when he seeks to gratify them, they are ever driven back upon themselves and find no vent. It is not until we are quickened by the Spirit of God, and are brought into relations of grace, that this instinct of our nature finds ample sweep.

If this be true, what must be at last the terrible loneliness of the sinner? There is one place on earth where the imagination is most impressed with a sense of loneliness. It is when we die. Friends take us by the hand and go down with us into the valley, passing from ledge to ledge, from ravine to ravine, deeper and darker as we descend together. But by and by we reach a spot where the living stop, and we must go alone. Oh! I would not be an unpardoned sinner in that dying moment, putting away all the realities and terrors that are beyond! I would not be an unpardoned sinner at that dying hour, for the very loneliness of the experience—to go by one's self to the very merge of the river, as it rolls at the bottom of the steep, and all alone put down the foot and touch those cold waters which send their chill through the frame and instantly congeal the blood! God's child touches, in that moment of loneliness, the hand of his Leader. He looks with the eye of confiding

faith upon the Crucified One, and the Elder Brother puts around his trembling form the arms of His love, and he is not alone in death. But there on that bed where the unpardoned sinner breathes his last, you have the spot where a man is completely alone. There is a story told in the legends of Scottish martyrology of a girl who, because she would not give up her faith in her precious Redeemer, was stationed far out upon the beach from which the sea at its ebb had retired; and there she was left alone, with every loving heart and every loving eye driven from her presence. It was a part of her torture to gaze upon the advancing tide as it rolled up and covered her feet—still rising inch by inch, until it covered her breast, until it covered her chin, her throat, and passing over her head extinguished her life. And yet there was an angel band looking down from the skies; and the hand of Jesus, whom she had long loved, held her in that hour of loneliness, and she passed in company through the gates of pearl to the enjoyment of an everlasting rest. But, sinner, it is a fearful picture of what will be your loneliness, if, in that dying hour, you have no Christ to whisper in your ear, "Be not afraid, it is I; let not your heart be troubled; peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you."

And is there any language to describe the loneliness of a lost soul in eternity? Look out upon that shipwrecked seaman on his solitary plank, upon the waves of the boundless ocean. Above him is the sky, boundless and vast; beneath and around him spreads the open sea, with nothing to break his gaze until the clouds come down at the distant horizon and touch it. Oh! what a loneliness is this upon the wide sea, with nothing but sky above and water beneath, and companionship nowhere! Sinner, it is the picture of the loneliness of hell: to me the most fearful aspect of it, worse than its fires, worse than its tortures. Oh! to be crushed in, *crushed in*, CRUSHED IN upon myself! Peering out through the vastness everywhere, and finding no help, no friend, no heart, no God! My hearers, that is to be damned! May God save you from the actual experience of it, and give to us all, rather, a blessed companionship with our Father.

XXII.

THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT.

EPHESIANS i, 13:—"*In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.*"

The entire passage, of which this forms only a clause, reads thus: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

One of the minor proofs of the inspiration of the Bible is the wonderful interweaving of the doctrines of grace into the very texture of its language. So that if a destructive criticism, or a subtle exposition, should succeed in deleting, or in evading, the more formal and explicit statements, the impossible task has to be encountered at last of eliminating the truth from these more incidental utterances. So true is this, that not one solitary doctrine in which our salvation is involved, can be extirpated from the Scriptures, as long as one single thread of Scripture language hangs upon another. Thus, for security, does the Holy Spirit imbed the Gospel of our salvation in the very frame of Bible phraseology; and thus are we often overtaken with sweet surprise when, out of the bosom of Scripture language, springs up anew some precious aspect of divine truth. For example, the whole doctrine of the Trinity is enfolded in the passage which I have just read, and from which the text is taken. It is the Father who seals us "to the praise of his glory;" we are sealed *in* the Son, by whom we have been redeemed, and who is the immediate object of our faith; and we are sealed *with* the Holy Spirit, who is the "earnest of our inheritance;" and thus a wide scope of doctrine is opened before us, from which, however, I must turn entirely aside that we may consider simply the sealing itself.

"In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." That Holy Spirit of promise! The reference, un-

doubtedly, is to what the Savior so often recited in the memorable discourse which He delivered to His disciples at the institution of the Supper: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." A little later, in the same discourse, our Lord said: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Accordingly, at the moment of His ascension, just before the clouds received Him out of the sight of His disciples, our Lord gave them the command, "that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me." Ten days later, when they were all gathered together praying in an upper room, "there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." [Acts ii, 2-4.] A little later in the Book of Acts, as you trace the labors of Paul, you find him at Ephesus, where are certain disciples, whom he addresses with the question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" The reply was, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost: And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied" [Ibid. xix, 2-6]: which passage I take to be the key which unlocks other instructive and impressive passages in the epistles of Paul: as, for example, in the thirtieth verse of the fourth chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians: "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." And then in the text: "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that

Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

These passages, put together in their proper relation, seem to me, my brethren, to teach that the Dispensation under which we live is pre-eminently the Dispensation of the Holy Ghost. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;" which the historian immediately interprets for us: "This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." [John vii, 37-39.] "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you" [John xvi, 7]; and the first proof given to the Church of Christ's session at the right hand of the Father in glory, was the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, when He descended in cloven tongues of fire and rested upon each of them, and filled them with the gift of tongues. Thus, against the sneers of those who would make religion purely a matter of the reason, and who are so fond of deriding the strong and tender emotions which lie in the heart of our piety—in the face of all this scoffing, we must contend for the outpouring of the Spirit as being the special signature which is affixed to this Dispensation under which we live. Says Paul, in the third chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians, "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glorious, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." Blessed be God, we live under this Dispensation of the Holy Spirit. The great blessing which is to be realized to our faith, until the second coming of our Lord, is the evident presence, the manifest power of the Holy Spirit dwelling individually in the heart of every believer, and collectively in the bosom of the Church. The fulfilment of this promise of our ascending Lord, which began in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Day of Pentecost, you and I are to accept as only a germinant fulfilment of that which is to be repeated again and again in all the ages of the Church, until the great signal shall sound from the clouds and our descending Lord shall come the second time, "without sin unto

salvation," "to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

"In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

A seal is used for three distinct purposes. It is used to authenticate important public instruments, so as to put them beyond disputation and cavil. As, for example, a Minister going to a foreign Court has the seal of the State impressed upon his credentials, by which he is authenticated to those to whom he goes; so that his official acts, under the operation of this seal, become the acts of the government which he represents. Treaties formed between States become binding upon the contracting parties by virtue of the respective seals which they attach to the instrument of union. And so in a dozen other instances which I might easily specify.

Again, a seal is used to mark possession; as when you write your name upon any article of dress; and when, as upon the prairies of the West, the name of the owner is branded in a monogram upon the form of the beast. Out of this use of the seal springs that ancient science of heraldry, which, in these days of levelling, is becoming more and more obsolete; when one's place in the nobility of the land is constantly asserted by his coat of arms and crest, through which he publishes, not only the station which he holds, but the legal title upon which he claims it.

And then a seal is used for the purpose of security; as if, for example, you should give me a package of jewels and I return it to you with the seal unbroken, a single glance of the eye reveals to you that I have not tampered with the trust. It would be a very interesting line of thought, which I do not intend, however, separately to pursue, to show how all these uses of the seal are combined in the work of the Holy Spirit—by which we are authenticated as the people of God—by which we are discriminated from the world and marked out before the eye of the great Master as His peculiar possession—and by which we are secured, being "kept, by his power, through faith, unto the salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last time." I shall not touch upon these points, though they will be implicated in the line of thought which I desire to pursue this morning. The great question arises before us, how is the Holy Spirit this seal? For mark the peculiar language of the text: "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed *with* that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." The Holy Ghost Himself, in

His personal indwelling in the believer, and in all that work of faith which He accomplishes, is the seal; and now the question which I desire to answer is, IN WHAT RESPECTS IS THE HOLY SPIRIT, IN THE DISCHARGE OF HIS SPECIAL OFFICES, THIS SEAL OF GOD UNTO THE CHRISTIAN?

1. *In the first place, in His whole work of illumination, whereby we are brought to a firm persuasion of the truth as it is found in the Word.* The Bible is, in one respect, just like any other book. It is made up of a large body of verbal propositions, which we are to interpret exactly as we interpret propositions in any other book, by the exercise of the natural understanding. We may not be able to grasp the incomprehensible things which are hid within those propositions; yet we must, by the laws of grammatical construction, find that they are contained therein—putting word by word and clause by clause, and ascertaining, by a proper exegesis, the mind of the Spirit in the word.

But oh! how different is the knowledge that comes to us from this exercise of the natural understanding, from that divine knowledge which is acquired through the illumination of God's blessed Spirit. Do I not touch, as with the point of a needle, one of the features of your own Christian experience? How often is this Bible like the book that John, in the Apocalypse, "saw in the hand of him that sat on the throne, sealed with seven seals," and "no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither, under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon!" You bend over the pages of the inspired volume, and lo! its holy meaning is utterly locked up to your apprehension: not that you cannot explain the verbal proposition in which divine truth is contained; but after you have gathered the meaning of the bare words, the glorious truth which lies tucked within the folds of the language is so wrapped in obscurity that your eye cannot gaze upon the mighty mystery, and your heart is not filled with comfort. And then you bow your knees in prayer to Him who gives to you the promise of the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who shall teach you in all things whatsoever you need to know; and you pray that your eyes may be opened to behold the wondrous things out of God's law. You pray in the very language of Paul, as found in the closing verses of this chapter, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." And lo! as you are pouring out your burdened heart in

these utterances of prayer, the page, which was before covered with mist, is illuminated as by a glory coming from the throne of God. All the darkness flees away, and you go down, in the power of your faith and in the enjoyment of your love, into the very depths of these divine testimonies, and drink in the truth to the nourishment of your souls.

I may illustrate it by a case which you will regard as analagous. A man born blind, if instructed as to the scientific theories of light, may stand before an audience with a most learned exposition of the laws of light and of all its curious phenomena; and yet, from the lack of the one organ which is essential to the experience, he has not the dimmest conception of the very light about which he is discoursing. What a caution does it suggest to those who stand where I stand to-day—that a man with a cultivated reason may enter into all the teachings of this Book, and comprehend the science of the Gospel in its articulations, and build it up in its symmetry and beauty before the hearer; and yet he himself be as one born blind, having no power to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and as that glory is unfolded in this second incarnation of our Lord which we find in the sacred Scriptures! When the Holy Spirit, the original inspirer and author of the Word, comes with His illuminating power, there is what I cannot describe better than as a mighty seizure of the truth, on our part, in its reality and in its power. We may not be able to comprehend the mystery which that truth discloses; but we grasp the fact; and the mind is borne forward irresistibly to a firm persuasion that it is the truth of God, in all its incomprehensibleness. There is a seizure, in which we are conscious that the mind has really grasped the truth and holds it as a reality and as a power. Along with this, there is a delightful repose of the mind upon the truth as communicated to us upon the testimony of God; which I suppose to be what the Apostle intends when he speaks of the "riches of the full assurance of understanding."

Here, then, is one way in which the Holy Spirit is a seal. Having inspired the Bible, being Himself the original author of its language, He comes, with His secondary office, and exponds that language, opening the eyes, quickening the intellect, communicating truth, taking the things which belong to Christ and revealing them unto us. As the result of all this, we grasp the truth and repose upon it as the verity of God. We have the seal which God affixes to His Word, authenticating it to us as His truth; just as human instruments, put before a human court, are by the use of human seals. For it is one of the most wonderful of all the facts of Christian experience, that by just so much

as the truth is unutterably grand and surpasses our natural comprehension, by just so much is it sealed upon the mind of the believer. Thus the deepest mysteries of grace are received with just as much firmness of persuasion, as truths which are capable of the most positive demonstration. A Christian man holds to the doctrine of the trinity in the Godhead, holds to the doctrine of the incarnation of the eternal Son, holds to the doctrine of the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human soul in perfect consistency with the perfect spontaneity of all its own movements—utterly incomprehensible as they all are—with just as much confidence in their truth as he receives the facts which can be ascertained to him by the evidence of his senses. Through this illumination of the Holy Spirit, we are borne forward to this persuasion of the truth as we find it in the Word of God.

2. In the second place, *the Holy Spirit is a seal in all those fruits of grace which, in our progressive sanctification, He works within us.* The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." [Galatians v, 22, 23.] "The fruit of the Spirit," says the same Apostle in another place, "is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." [Eph. v, 9.] When the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of Jesus Christ, dwells within us, He discharges a three-fold office. He is a *witness* to our adoption; He is the *seal* of our personal acceptance before God; He is the *first fruits* of the salvation which we experience, and therefore "the earnest of the inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Dwelling in our hearts, if so be we are God's children, He discharges this three-fold office of a witness, of a seal and of an earnest, as He works in us all those fruits of the Spirit which I have just enumerated.

But here a difficulty emerges. How can we discriminate, in these fruits of the Holy Spirit within us, between His testimony and our own? For, according to the law which seems to be accepted under the government of God, as it is necessary under that of man, every truth shall be established to our satisfaction under the testimony of two witnesses. Paul recognizes this in the eighth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, when he discriminates between the witness of the Spirit and our own testimony: "The Spirit itself beareth witness *with* our spirit, that we are the children of God." Now, the question arises, if this witness of the Spirit is in part found to consist in what we inwardly experience, how are we to distinguish His testimony from the witness which our own spirit bears to the same fact! I think the solution is here. These

fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, are all certified to us upon the testimony of consciousness as being *our* experiences. The peace is *our* peace, the love is *our* love, the joy is *our* joy, the long-suffering is *our* long-suffering. We have the testimony of our own spirit, which is nothing else than the deliverance which consciousness makes as to the fact that these are acts which proceed from us, under the operation of those laws which govern and control them. We know them to be ours; and hence they constitute, under the testimony of consciousness, the witness of our spirit.

But mark, not one of those graces would ever exist, unless the Holy Spirit had first planted the germ within us; nor would those germs be developed into growth and fruit-bearing, if the Holy Ghost did not preside over that new life which he has imparted—exciting and directing those graces so that they are brought up from their obscurity, where they are hid away as secret principles in the depths of the soul. Thus you see that the two, though blended together, are distinct. You have the witness of the Spirit of God in your own spirit. Your own spirit bears witness to the fact that you have certain exercises; but those exercises never could have an existence, if they were not produced and constantly developed by the indwelling Spirit of God. When you are reading, in your own experience, the witness of your own spirit, you are at the same time reading the witness of the Holy Ghost. Just as sometimes happens with an ancient manuscript: there is a plain reading upon the surface of the parchment; and then there is another reading, beneath that which is patent to the eye, of some more ancient writer who has penned his thoughts in a cipher that is concealed beneath. So does the Holy Ghost with His finger write upon the heart these evidences of our acceptance with God; and then consciousness bearing testimony that these are our experiences, we have the witness of the Holy Spirit mingled and blent with the witness of our spirit.

This may be illustrated by reference to one feature of the Christian life, which, perhaps, is among the most conspicuous. It is universally true, that no past evidences ever brought a soul to an assurance of hope. They subserve an important end in relieving us from the pressure of despair. It is a great support, sometimes, to remember the Lord from the hill Mizar, and call to mind His past mercies. Often in our despondency we exclaim, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?" Yet, recalling the way by which the Lord has led us, and the conflicts in which we have so abundantly triumphed, we are preserved from sinking into absolute despair.

I appeal to the experience of every saint in this assembly, if the remembrance of any past communion with God—if the recollection of any former joy, or of anything written in the leaves of the book which you have sealed up—ever brought you to a confident assurance of your being a child of God? The great law of grace, under which we live, is the law of faith: "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Under the operation of this law, there can be no comfort, there can be no joy, except in the present exercise of faith as it immediately rests upon a personal God and Redeemer. Just as it was with the Israelites when they passed through the desert: they sought to gather up in one day the manna that should last them for two days, and lo! it bred worms and stank. And the past Christian experience, upon which any of you shall try to lean for the hope and strength of the present, will be an experience like that manna. Before your eyes it shall breed worms, and you shall turn from it with loathing. We must go out with the rising sun and gather the manna fresh every day, in the exercise of a new faith; it being the law of the spiritual life, as well as of the natural, that every moment shall have its own breath. We breathe in the air and we breathe it out, and by these repeated breathings we live. Thus we draw our life from Christ; and, by these repeated breathings of the soul, we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us. See, then, how the Holy Ghost, dwelling within us as a witness, as a seal, as an earnest, plants within us the graces of a Christian, develops them into action, directs them in all their movements, lifts them out of the darkness, holds them up before the mind so that we recognize them as our own; and thus the two testimonies are united in the affirmation of the common fact that we are the children of God.

3. In the third place, *the Holy Spirit is a seal in the comfort and joy which He sheds abroad in us.* Says Paul, in the fourteenth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is not a kingdom that comes by observation, breaking in upon you from without. It is *within* you; and the proof of its existence is what you find in yourself, righteousness and joy and peace. Again, in the fifteenth chapter of the same epistle, he prays, on behalf of the Roman Christians: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." But I turn from these apostolic testimonies to the dearer voice

of our own Lord. You remember the benediction which He pronounced upon His disciples in the hour of their sorrow, when He was about to depart from them: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." Nor could He finish His discourse until He rose to a higher pitch, and said: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Will you pardon the personal reference, when I say that for many years I have longed with a longing indescribable to be able to preach two sermons on those two texts? and could I, at any time, only say to this people all that lies in that word of Jesus, "My peace I give unto you"—and then if I could add what the Savior means when He says, "My joy I give unto you"—I would be willing to have these lips sealed in the silence of the tomb.

"My peace give I unto you." Oh, blessed Jesus, THY PEACE! The restfulness of thy perfect human soul in accomplishing all thy Father's will, keeping His commandments and glorifying His justice? That peace which brought serenity to thee, as thou didst stand upon the threshold of thy great agony; when thou couldst overleap the bloody death, and in the very foretaste of all that was bitter in the experience of the curse, could there speak of thy peace and of thy joy—willing to shed these down upon the Church as the atmosphere which it should breathe, and finding their consummation at last in the rest of the eternal Sabbath, and in that flood of joy which fills heaven with such unspeakable splendor and glory! Is not the whole Gospel of the blessed God lying in the words, "My peace I give unto you?" Ah, brethren, when the Holy Ghost comes in the name of Jesus Christ and sits upon His throne in the human heart, He puts out His holy hand and touches all the emotions and affections and instincts of our nature, and lifts us above this world of sense to fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ; and we are nearer to God than ever Moses was, when he stood upon the mount within the cloud and talked with God face to face. Then it is that the peace, which the Savior spake in His benediction to His disciples, is found to be "the peace which passeth all understanding, which is unspeakable and full of glory." And when you have it, as at times you do in some of its measure at least, you have the sealing of the Holy Ghost bearing witness with your spirit that you have really passed from death to life.

4. In the fourth place, *we find the sealing of the Holy Ghost in the boldness given us in our approach to God, and in the mighty power which we have in prayer.* If, with your natural reason, you undertake to bear

up under the conception of God, it will be too weighty for you. Think of Him in His absolute eternity, who was, who is, who is to come, having His being within Himself, the uncaused, the infinite, the eternal Jehovah. Stretch out the pinions of your imagination, and even though they should have the eagle's strength, which ascends even into the face of the sun, they cannot bear the weight of this thought of God's existence as one "ETERNAL NOW." Then think of His omnipresence, so that, if we fly to the distant parts of the sea, His hand shall lead us and His right hand shall hold us; looking down into the secret folds of every human heart, and taking up every thought in its earliest germ: and think of that mighty power which takes up the mountains and the islands as a very little thing, and holds the stars in the palm of His hand; and say if you do not find your reason reeling under the majestic conception, until at last you are crushed into the posture of adoring worship!

Yes, thrice blessed be thy name, eternal God, when human thoughts become too heavy for human reason to sustain, they glide so easily into frames of devotion! Where we cannot reason, it is given us to adore; and what cannot be sustained in thought, may at His footstool become the language of our worship. And yet, with these overwhelming conceptions of God's majesty and glory, with what boldness do you in your closet unveil before Him all the secrets of your nature! It is worth the labor of studying the Greek tongue in order to read that one word which tells you what this boldness is with which a man in his prayer approaches God—the power of telling Him, who knows it before, all that is within us. Secrets which we dare not breathe into the ear of the most confidential friend, lest it should rupture the bonds of love, we can reveal to infinite purity itself. We can pray, in the language of the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

What power, too, the Holy Spirit gives us in prayer! It is seen in those vehement desires which become the instinct of the new-born soul, and bear a man to the mercy seat; so that he shall press his bosom against the very altar, and there plead and wrestle until the prayer is answered.

And then the patience, with all this passion of desire, which enables us to wait at that altar; holding fast to the Savior's work and God's promise, through weeks and months and years of dark discouragement! There are parents listening to the sound of my voice, who have

been praying for five and twenty years for the conversion of their sons daughters, as, from the sense of eternal things, they feel the importance of their salvation; and yet, through five and twenty years of despondency and trial, they are to-day kneeling with the same hopefulness that God will at the last remember His covenant, in which He has said, "I will be a God unto thee, and unto thy seed after thee." Oh, the power, in this emergency, of desire at the mercy seat; and then the power in patience, to wait there through long years, in which God seems to deny the suit and to turn away the face of His throne! How could it be, unless the Holy Ghost, inditing these petitions within us, held us to that throne of grace; until, in the fulness of time, God shall appear from the bosom of the cloud and drop down the spiritual blessings upon us, for which our souls have been praying through so many years? You see in this the sealing of God's Holy Spirit; when, by His indwelling power, He keeps us to our duty and holds us steadfast in faith, so that we do not waver even in the dark.

5. Lastly, *we have the sealing of the Holy Ghost in the stimulus which He continually gives to the spiritual life;* whereby we are all the time lifted above our conflicts and above our toils, and, my brethren, above our griefs. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you," says the Savior. When the world would give its peace, it is by fending off trouble and sorrow from us. But the Lord gives us peace when we are in the bosom of anguish, almost like that which broke the heart of Jesus when He passed beneath the curse of the broken law. How constant is the grace which quickens the spiritual life, and enables us to lift up the hands which hang down, to strengthen the feeble knees, and to pursue the path of patience unto the end! My brethren, is it my experience and not yours? Do you not know something of the weariness of this constant battle with yourself, with the world, with the devil? Are there not moments when your energies flag—when it seems as though you must yield at last to the combined alliances against you, and give up the contest? And yet there comes, in the very hour of exhaustion, a strange strength; and we lift ourselves up from every defeat, and lay hold upon the toil and duty of life and work on, even though the nerves and the muscles are all aching with the pain; until God shall say, "It is enough," and give us the rest that shall come after it.

What power, too, we have to go down under accumulated sorrows, lower than Jonah ever went in the belly of the whale, when "the earth with her bars was about him!" God's strokes fall one after another upon your head, and you are driven deeper and deeper into the billows

which break over you: but just there, in the depths of the sea, you are able to say, with David, "Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me and my prayer unto the God of my life." The life of God in the human soul is vividly compared, by the old writers, to a spark of fire upon the bosom of the vast ocean; yet, though engulfed in the waves, because it is a coal of life, it burns on still amidst the dashing billows. Thus is the divine life quickened within us and stimulated by the indwelling Spirit, "who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession."

But I must close this discourse. Perhaps I have wearied you; and yet the truth lies so near all our experience, that I think you can hardly tire of it. Let me, in the application, address three special thoughts to you:

1. *All that the Holy Spirit does in this matter of sealing, He does in and by the Word.* Do you notice the emphasis of the Lord's language? When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; *but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.* He shall glorify me: for *he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*" Now, the third Person of the Godhead is not restricted in His powers. But as the Son subordinates Himself in His office to the Father, so the Holy Ghost subordinates Himself in His office to the Son. He could teach us all science, and yet He does not. He could communicate all philosophy, but He does not. He simply takes the things which belong to Jesus Christ and shows them unto us. The sphere of His illumination is the written Word; and this is our protection against fanaticism. Said Luther, when the mystics of his day raved around him of their secret inspiration, in the impatience and scorn which belonged to his strong heart, "I slap your spirit upon its snout." All revelations must be brought to the law and to the testimony: "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Avaunt, avaunt, as spectres from the world of darkness, all these revelations of spirits! God has spoken in the person of His own Son, who shall come after Jesus Christ. The Son, revealing out of the depths of the divine nature these transcendental mysteries of the Godhead, and, by the power of the Holy Ghost, embalming them in human speech—shall we have, after this, the babblings of spirits conjured up around a table in a darkened room? We need no other revelations, since we have the utterance of God's own thoughts, through the speech of His own Son and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

No, the Church stands impregnable upon these Scriptures as her tower of defence; and nothing is to be received by us as the truth of God, which is not in conformity with the teachings of this Book. Behold how Peter binds the sanctification of the believer with the work of Jesus Christ, and with the word of truth: "Seeing," says he, "ye have purified your souls *in obeying the truth through the Spirit*;" and then, as though this were not enough, adds directly after, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth forever." Even when the Holy Ghost quickens the sinner into life, the very seed of that life is the Word of God; and this is our protection against every form of delusion If, in your incredulity, you reject the evidences of the Gospel, you will come at last to the stupendous credulity of believing everything else. As it has been quaintly put by another, "when a man has lost faith in God, then he begins to have faith in ghosts."

2. *This witness of the Holy Spirit is intermittent, yet progressive.* Most Christians are troubled on this doctrine of assurance. "Oh! that I could be assured beyond all doubt that I am a child of God." And they do not know that they have had this assurance a thousand times. Why, brethren, there is not a moment of real spiritual communion with God, when that assurance is not yours. When, in the closet, you are able to weep over your sins and feel a true shame for them; and, in honest boldness, uncover them all to God—in those moments when you are holding fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, just then you can no more doubt your acceptance with God than you can doubt your natural existence. In the experience through which you are passing, so full of sweetness, the Sealer is setting His seal upon you; and you know by the mouth of two witnesses—that of your own spirit and that of the Holy Ghost—that you are a child of God.

But the misconception is here: What these Christians mean is an assurance which shall be the permanent and fixed habit of the soul. Now, that is a very different thing. Our misfortune and our guilt is, that we are not always in the exercise of faith; that these experiences, so full of joy and comfort, are occasional, and not constant. It is a mark of high sanctification when faith becomes a steady principle, always pointing to God and to the Redeemer—and love goes forth in constant exercise. Only in that case does this assurance, which was occasional before, become the fixed and permanent condition of the soul. Make this distinction. Strive for that degree of grace when your peace shall be as a river: but gratefully accept the sealing of God's Spirit

in even those joys which you are prone to disparage because of their inconstancy.

3. See how near Christian experience on earth comes to Christian experience in heaven. The same love, the same joy, the worship, the same obedience, there and here. The conditions under which these are rendered differ in the two worlds; but as to the essence of the thing, what you are now you are to be hereafter in heaven. How solemn it makes this earth! The germ of it all is here. This world, darkened as it is by sorrow and sin, is only the porch of the great temple, through which we are passing only to enter into the blessed mysteries of God within. Let us hold fast to our faith, and realize, at every step, our dependence upon the Holy Ghost, just as we realize our dependence upon Jesus Christ. When conscience accuses you, you go to the blood, you kneel at the cross, and you depend absolutely upon the one perfect sacrifice offered for sin. Just so, depend upon the Holy Ghost; whose office it is to seal you in all the faculties of your nature to God's service here and to the enjoyment of Him hereafter.

XXIII.

LAW AND LOVE.

I JOHN iv, 10:—"*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*"

Two thoughts are lodged in this language—that God is love and that God is law; and it would surprise your research to find how constantly these ideas intersect each other, like the warp and the woof, in the whole texture of Scriptural language. There is, for example, that splendid proclamation which Jehovah made of Himself to His servant Moses: "The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Then that sweet utterance in the eighty-fifth Psalm: "Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven." And, parallel with this, the language in the eighty-ninth Psalm: "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face." When we turn to the New Testament, it would almost fatigue one to gather up the testimonies upon the same point. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "God," says Paul, "commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And then in the verse immediately preceding the text: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."

These two thoughts presented separately in the text are announced with peculiar emphasis. "Herein is love;" as though, in comparison with the originality, freedom and infinitude of God's love, all other manifestations of this sentiment were as nothing. Just as with the being and with the holiness of God, the Scriptures ascribe them to Him in a sense which is exclusive. All other beings possess existence con-

tingent and derived; but God is of Himself, from everlasting to everlasting, the same yesterday, to-day and forevermore. The holiness of all other beings, however exalted, is a holiness which is communicated; but God only is holy. So that we can engage in the ascription of praise to Him upon this ground: "Who shall not fear thee, oh Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy." Just so in the text—God is love. Whilst he has created us with these affections which we are freely distributing over our kind, yet we do not reach to the conception of absolute love until we see it in God. "Herein is love."

And the other thought, that God is law—with what emphasis is it expressed in the reference which is here made to the propitiation for our sins? His only begotten Son must cover the law with His perfect obedience, before there can be any manifestation of God's love to the guilty and the condemned. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." I take up these two thoughts this morning, not separately, but as they intersect each other—the love inter-penetrating the law, and the law placed beneath the love as the basis upon which it rests—the one so perfectly inter-penetrating the other that we are unable to separate the two—the enforcement of law on the part of Jehovah being the highest exhibition of love which He can make to the universe; and when He shall come forth in the highest manifestation of His love even to the sinner, there is found the preservation of His own integrity and the upholding of His own perfect government. The proof of this is most abundant when we go into the scheme of redemption and analyze the principles upon which it rests. But I desire this morning to pass entirely over the proof of this great fact as being, perhaps, sufficiently familiar to you, in order that we may throw ourselves into the posture of pious meditation, and revolve the results accruing to us from the combination of law with love in the proceedings of God towards our race.

1. In the first place, *it draws forth the deepest reverence of our own souls towards God.* Even in our earthly relations, love is founded upon respect. There is indeed a blind affection in man very nearly akin to the instinct of the brute, and perhaps indispensable in order to preserve intact the various relations in which we are thrown in life: and there is an inconsiderate and partial fondness sometimes in man, having its origin in sheer accident or caprice. But love, that deserves the name—love which has the power to endure through all trials, and to sustain all possible sacrifices, is founded upon respect. We discover in the character of those to whom love is given, certain substantial qualities which draw

forth our esteem; and this esteem deepens into admiration and then into love. True, we are often mistaken in the estimate which is thus formed, and hence it comes to pass that this poor life is strewn with the wrecks of broken friendships. Perhaps, amongst all the hardnesses of human fortune, there is no lot so severe as when we are brought into relations which impose upon us the obligation of love, and when, through the unworthiness of the object, that love becomes a natural impossibility. But, my brethren, it is of immense consequence that we should distinguish between that love of God which many conceive as being a weak partiality, and that robust affection which springs from His own goodness and is always directed by infinite wisdom. It does not flame forth, as with man, a mere emotion, oftentimes expended in the very energy of putting it forth. It is no capricious sentiment, resting upon partial observation of the character and qualities of the creature; but a love which proceeds freely and necessarily from Himself, and which, in its outpouring, sweeps away all the obstacles which hinder its progress. A robust love, if I may be allowed the application of such a term to the love of the infinite God, upon which perfect and inflexible justice may itself look with the most entire approval, commends the Deity to us as infinitely worthy the homage of our reverence.

Thus, brethren, it comes to pass that in our nearest approach to God, when we lay all our burdens upon Him, and confess before Him all our sins, there is an adoring reverence of His majesty and of His holiness; and we can see the propriety of the language which Paul uses, in his epistle to the Hebrews, when he says: "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire." In all the boldness with which we approach God, and spread out before Him all the desires of our hearts and all the necessities of our life, there is no weak and foolish fondling of the Deity; but the awful shadow of His majesty rests upon the soul. Whilst we embrace Him with the arms of the most tender affection, and breathe into His ear all the confidences of our heart, our spirits are prostrate before Him in the profoundest adoration and worship.

2. In the second place, *this combination of law and love presents a firm basis, upon which we can rest our hopes.* What a mistake, when men think to magnify God's love by rendering it arbitrary, and claim that His forgiveness of sin should spring purely and alone from His sovereignty! We are constrained to conceive of divine things after the manner of human thought; and yet, I do not know that it is wholly irreverent to say that even the absoluteness of God clearly creates an

obligation to act worthily of Himself. It is a feeble conclusion to say that because He is free and no power exists above Him which can inspect His conduct or arraign Him before its tribunal, therefore the actions of the Deity may be capricious; and that, in the exercise of arbitrary sovereignty alone, He should, in the way of general amnesty, pardon the breaches of His holy law. By just so much as God is alone; by just so much as He is the absolute, and there is no other God beside Him in all the universe—by just so much must God act according to the principles of His own nature; and it is wholly inconceivable that a being thus glorious and vast can ever, in the unfoldings of His plan, contravene the essential properties of His own being. But, setting this thought entirely aside, and looking simply at our advantage in the case, if God pardons sin without a reason—that is to say, if, in the exercise of naked sovereignty, without any reference to the claims of His own government and the perfections of His own nature, He should pardon transgression without an atonement, what guarantee would we have that the love which is purely arbitrary in its exercise, might not be just as arbitrarily withdrawn? If He be not, in all the manifestations of His love, at the same time a God of law—if He does not disclose this principle of love imbedded in His law—if love, as it works itself out, in the redemption and salvation of a lost race, does not proceed upon the line of law—if justice does not coincide with mercy, and holiness unite with compassion, in the pardon which God grants to the sinner, then I ask, what security have we that it will be maintained throughout the ages of eternity? The same caprice which, without a reason, can bestow a blessing, may afterwards withdraw it, and leave us in a poverty and ruin far worse than the original. But when, in the Scriptures, we find these truths continually presented together—that, though God is love, and shows His love in the gift of His own Son, yet this love is manifested through a propitiation for our sins—then we have a permanent basis upon which our hopes repose. If all the attributes of God's nature harmonize in the scheme of grace, there is left none to stand at the gate of the eternal world to bar our entrance. "Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other:" and, if truth springs out of the earth, righteousness also looks down from heaven. Justice and judgment are ever the habitation of His throne, however it may be that mercy and truth go before His face.

3. In the third place, *in this union of love and law God makes a sure provision for the true welfare of His people.* The love that is intelligent, always aims to bless. You see it in the parent, who regulates his

affections with reference to the permanent welfare of his child. The range of his vision is far more extensive, and he looks at results which the child is utterly unable to comprehend. Whilst in its waywardness it is continually asking the things which are hurtful, the love which is wisely directed, looking at the character which is to be formed and the future work to be achieved, will exhibit itself to that child as truly in the denial as in the granting of its prayer. How often are we, under the pressure of severe affliction, compelled to fall back upon this principle in reference to God! The dispensations of His Providence are oftentimes profoundly mysterious; but then we know that God is always wise and good—and, therefore, we ascribe praise to Him in the perfect surrender of our will. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do that which is right?" "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." What a triumph, when the soul is wrenched with its agony, when all its schemes are blasted, and the whole world spreads itself out as a waste and a desert—to be able, in the crushing of all these affections and hopes, sincerely to bless God in what He takes away, just as we bless Him in what He gives! "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away:" but whether it be this, or whether it be that, "blessed be the name of the Lord." Imitating the perfect submission of our Master, which is presented as our pattern, we bow down in our prayer and say, "Not my will, but thine, oh God, be done."

But, brethren, would it be possible for us thus to submit our will to God's will, unless there were an underlying conviction that He is not only loving, but wise; and that in all the dispensations of His hand, He is advancing the true welfare of His people? We are assured of this when we find that, in all the manifestations of His love, He is never regardless of the claims of His own law. How perfectly is this realized in the scheme of redemption! The sinner, under the pressure of guilt, and feeling the edge of the curse cutting through and piercing even to the core, only wants to escape the punishment which that curse inflicts. But our God, who will honor this law in the highest exhibition of His love, has, in that, a supreme regard to the true welfare of the creature whom He would save. The infinite God sees that those who are made in His image could not be happy, unless they are extricated from the curse. There could be no triumphant step through the gates of pearl and along the golden streets of the city, unless the shame of their sin were taken away. Having implanted within us the principle of justice, which is constantly echoing back the justice in Himself, He knows that we could not be happy without the discovery that his justice

has been satisfied and its claims perfectly met. Therefore He "sends his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." He lays our guilt upon Him who stands for us under the law; and we are not only relieved from the curse, but we stand before God, rejoicing in the assurance that this pardon has been obtained through the satisfaction of all the requisitions of infinite justice itself. In this scheme of redemption, our heavenly Father provides that we shall be happy in becoming holy. The sinner, working out his own salvation at his own charges, and rejecting the salvation of the Gospel, has no regard to this principle of inward, personal holiness. He is satisfied to bear with his own sinful heart, if so be, that God shall not overtake its transgressions with His penalty. But how shall we be happy in the presence of God, who is perfectly holy, unless we too are made holy? And so, this wonderful redemption, which is illustrated in the Supper as we shall this afternoon celebrate it, not only reveals how we are extricated from the curse upon the principles of justice and of law; but how He, who has "magnified the law, and made it honorable," communicates to us that spiritual life which is treasured in Himself, and thus prepares us for the glory that is beyond. Through the whole administration of grace, how careful is the God of our salvation to perfect human character, and to make it meet for the saints' inheritance in light? Whilst we suffer oftentimes with intense severity, and feel that the flesh is failing under the pressure of God's discipline, yet all these afflictions "work out for us the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Even as the gold is tried in the fire, so our faith, being much more precious, is tried under these afflictions, that it "may be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." My brethren, just because Jehovah is a God of law, as well as a God of love—because, to the very end, He will preserve the integrity of His own administration and compel us to glorify His justice, even when we rejoice in His compassion—therefore it is, in all the administration of His grace, He will secure the true welfare of those who put their trust in Him.

4. But I pass on rapidly, in the fourth place, to say that *the magnitude of this love is measured for us in the text by the gift of God's only Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Would you measure God's love? Where is the line? Can you undertake to measure God's proportions? "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty, unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell;

what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." If we are to measure God's love, it must be by no finite standard. It must be a standard which altogether transcends man and the proportions of man. And now, here is the measure: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Only God's Son, His only begotten, can be the measure of the love which God has shown to our lost race. That little particle "so," in the verse which I repeated just now, will stretch according to the expansion of our experience here on earth and in the world of glory. We shall never, in time nor in eternity, be able to say anything but this: "God *so* loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." The more your ideas expand, the larger your knowledge grows, the higher your affections ascend, the more rapturous your visions of God upon His throne, only the more does this little particle of comparison stretch itself, and you can only say, "God *so* loved the world!"

And now, my brethren, in applying this measure which is given in the text, you must put two or three things together. You must think of the infinite dignity and glory of the Son, the only begotten of the Father, equal with Him in power and glory. Ah! I wonder, when men derogate from the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ, and seek to make Him less than divine, that they are not appalled at the mischief which they are attempting; for they are robbing themselves of the only measure by which to ascertain the greatness of God's love. Take away the Son-ship of Jesus Christ, which makes Him the Father's equal in nature and in glory, and you have no adequate measure of the proportions of God's mighty love to our race.

Put all the creatures in heaven and upon the earth together; and in the aggregate of their powers you still create but one gigantic finite being, who cannot be the measure of God. Therefore our faith clings to the supreme divinity of our Lord; not only because it is indispensable to the salvation in which we rejoice, but because without it man is forever deprived of any measure by which he can conceive of the vastness of God's love to the sinner.

Then, when you have been impressed with the dignity and glory of this only begotten Son, add to it that boundless love which has always been interchanged between the Father and this Son, lying through all eternity in that Father's bosom, and declared to be his delight. I dare not press the thought, and yet I would not exclude it, imperfectly comprehended as it is; how much the blessedness of the infinite God de-

pends upon that mysterious subsistence by which He is the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Within the economy of the Godhead itself, there shall be verge and scope for the play of the affections, even of an infinite heart. The Father, as the Father, shall always have an infinite person in His Son, upon whom His infinite affections can forever terminate; and that Son shall reciprocate this infinite affection upon the person of the Father; and so, in the social existence and communion of the Godhead, there is the play of these affections as they exist only in the bosom of God. Think, then, of the Son, in His awful majesty as the Father's equal, and then of the ineffable fellowship between the two, as they are supremely blessed and happy in each other.

When you have put these two things together, follow the flight of that Son, in the sweep of His conscendsion, becoming incarnate, and taking upon Him the form of a servant, and being obedient to death, even the death of the cross. You have the whole breadth of God's law traversed by the Son, when He comes from the throne upon which that law is administered, and goes down into the curse itself by which that law is enforced. You must take in the reality of our Lord's personal sufferings. There are no words indeed to express, nor can the imagination conceive, all that is implied in the wrath of God. Yet, if the Redeemer was made a curse for us, under the judicial displeasure which rested upon Him as the sinner's substitute, then was there an awful reality in the suffering which He endured. How else that bitter cry, as He hung upon the tree, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Why else should ancient prophecy represent Him as pouring out His soul like water within Him, and making that soul an offering for sin? There was a real experience of the most real suffering; and that suffering was in its essential nature penal, under the administration of law and through the infliction of the curse.

Now put these different elements together—God's uncreated, eternal Son, the object of the Father's delight, going across the entire breadth of the law, and taking upon Himself the curse in our stead—and then you have the measure by which to ascertain the proportions of God's love. Hence this ordinance of the Supper has been instituted by that sufferer Himself, in order that we may see, in what He endures, the greatness of that Father's love. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

5. In the last place, *in this combination of law and love you have the hidden harmony between all of God's works; and redemption stands*

before us, the climax of Creation and Providence. I do not know that I am adequate to the elucidation of this thought. I am sure that its full exposition would double the length of an ordinary discourse; but we may at least skirt its edge.

My hearers, if God be one, and if He be infinite in His wisdom, power, goodness, justice, holiness and truth, then we may expect a corresponding unity to pervade all the operations of His hand. They are the real schismaticks who, under any name, undertake to divide between these works of God, which, in their relations, are but one work, glorious in its unity, as it is vast in its projection.

First of all, is Creation—God imprisoning in matter its hidden forces, and ordaining the laws under which they shall uniformly operate. To every creature and to every plant He commands that they shall produce, each after its own kind, to the end of the world. When the enormous wickedness of man brought on the catastrophe of the Deluge, Jehovah hung His sign in the heavens that henceforward seed-time and harvest should continue, and, of course, the laws upon which this succession of the seasons depends. In this fixed constitution of nature we have no slight proof of the divine benevolence. Without it man would be the sport of mere chance, unable to forecast the future and to become the creature of progress. It is only by this uniformity of sequences in the natural world that he is able to accumulate experience, and to build the future so that it shall be higher than the past. At the same time, the uniformity of law, which so conspicuously illustrates the parental goodness of the Deity, reflects the unchangeableness of His nature and of His purposes. It becomes the type, in the natural world, of the solemn grandeur of that moral government which exemplifies the perfect and inflexible holiness of Him who is at once the Creator and Ruler of the universe.

From the permanence and continuity of these natural processes, one result accrues, that God seems to hide His own personality behind a screen. His presence and His will are seen clearly enough in the original creative act by which these laws were projected. But in tracing their subsequent operation, they appear so fixed and necessary that we are betrayed into a forgetfulness of the supreme will in which they had their rise. As the Creator does not step forth from the cloud in the obtrusive exhibition of His power. His very presence is overlooked. In the investigations of science, we have to mourn the tendency to exalt the mechanism to the disparagment of the contriver and author. In tracing the material and secondary causes, and in showing the nexus by which

these are bound to the results that are produced, men are beguiled from considering the great Architect Himself: and the personal God, who built the universe and ordained the laws by which it is controlled, sinks down into the mere sum of all the forces by which the huge machine is driven.

After Creation comes Providence: which, just so far as it deals with the actions of intelligent and responsible beings, brings the Deity forth more distinctly as a person, and presents Him in the exercise of His individual will. Still the disclosure is far from being perfect, and, therefore, ultimate. Not only are the dispensations of Divine Providence themselves mysterious, but they are brought to pass largely by the operation of those invariable and mechanical laws to which I have already referred. If we could press behind the screen, we should find a personal God working out His own will through these natural agencies, and our impression of His personal being and power would be distinct enough.

If, then, both in Creation and in Providence, God is hidden from our thought behind the framework of Nature, may we not anticipate another work in which His concealed glory shall break forth in all its lustre? His work of grace appears thus as the climax of the other two, to which they have been pointing as their supplement. Here the divine personality is conspicuously revealed. God comes out of the pavilion and stands in the presence of man, who has risen in insurrection against His authority. Through the incarnation and mission of His own Son, He works out a scheme of redemption for a lost race: and it is in the full exposition of this that the whole mystery of the tri-personal subsistence is articulately unfolded.

But in connection with this assertion of God's personal affections and will in the scheme of grace, let it be noted as a co-ordinate fact that grace itself builds upon law as its basis. The law must be satisfied in all of its demands, and, therefore, a Savior must die as the propitiation for the sins of the guilty. Justice must be met, the penalty must be borne, and obedience must be rendered, before one solitary sinner can be saved. It is a most astounding fact, that in the work of God which most discloses His personal presence and the operation of His almighty will, we should find the most solemn assertion He has ever made of the sacredness and permanency of law. It is under this view that the work of grace is the climax of all the divine works; through all of which the most perfect harmony is seen to prevail.

Instead, therefore, of drawing the line sharply between Creation, Providence and Grace, they are only the planes which ascend, one above

the other; and by which we rise to God, who presides over all the departments, reveals Himself in the outworking of His own free will, and at the same time maintains the ascendency and permanency of law. The man who takes philosophy and science alone in his grasp, has but a truncated cone. When we have mastered both, we need Christianity, the work of redemption as wrought out by our adorable Redeemer, as the apex of that cone. Putting aside, for a moment, all the considerations that have reference to eternity and the judgment, it does seem to me that such a work as that of grace alone completes the achievements of the infinitely glorious and blessed God, and brings all His purposes and plans into perfect unity. You ascend these grades and find that, in redemption, not only does God make the most perfect exhibition of Himself as a personal being, exhibiting to us the operations of His individual will, but at the same time preserves the integrity of law. In the execution of His love, He shows with what perfect harmony He has arranged all the parts of this stupendous plan; so that the believer, as he ranges over them in his thought, gathers up the materials for worship and for praise.

I have thus attempted, under these five specifications, to illustrate the thought which I have deduced from the text. And now, my brethren, we are brought to one practical and most weighty conclusion: which is, that *reciprocated love is ever represented by obedience.* See the perfect correspondence between the two. If the God of love shows that He is love, by maintaining law; if He will not, in all His freedom, show compassion and mercy and pity and grace and love to any lost soul, so as to hide even for an instant His inflexible justice, His absolute holiness, His perfect purity, and His invincible truth—then the love which He exacts from us must be rendered upon the line of law. It is the constant representation of Christ Himself: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" He illustrates it, in that very connection, by the exquisite similitude of the vine; that, as the branches cannot bear fruit of themselves, except they abide in the vine, no more can we except we abide in Him. The practical proof of our attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ must be found in the obedience which we render to His commands. It is not enough that we shall gush in our private emotions over our Lord, and fondle Him with all endearing expressions. This will not satisfy the heart of Him, whose love for

us is so robust. It may be well for us, when we are in secret fellowship with our blessed Lord, to pour out, as far as human language can express it, the overflowing affection of our hearts. But, brethren, even in the earthly sphere, that love is not much valued that expends itself in talk. You have not much confidence in the affection of the child, however it may fondle you in its moments of good humor, who, under the impulse of its wilfulness, tramples upon your authority and disregards your commands. You expect a filial love to show itself in reverence for your person, in submission to your authority, and in obedience to your commands. In all earthly experience, the love that is truest is the love that is shown in the surrender of comfort and ease to the purposes and will of another. And so God, exhibiting His love to us through His law, means that we should do the same. Therefore in Providence we are put exactly where we are; thrown just into those exigencies that are so full of trial; that we may feel the pressure exactly where the pressure is painful, that we may lift up the burden when it is imposed in the form of care, and may be patient if it comes in the shape of bereavement and sorrow. By and by, when we sit down upon the mount of God, if it be possible for shame to be an element of our experience there, we will be scandalized at the blindness and infatuation with which we complained here of God's dealings with us. There is not an anxiety that springs out of your business which God does not put upon you, that, by its pressure, your character may be rendered more compact. Not a sorrow ever pressed upon the Christian heart, which God did not ordain in love. "Whom I love I chasten." It is the declaration of God Himself. We find the evidence of our Son-ship in the discipline by which this wise and loving Father is educating us for the life we are to lead, and for the works we are to achieve, hereafter. Who can think of the uses He will put us to by and by, when we stand in His presence where there is fulness of joy, and at His right hand where are pleasures forevermore? Do you suppose that we are to be idle in that presence, where all is activity and energy and will? God has holy works for us to do in heaven: and here, in the cares of the world—here, in the duties of life—here, under the trials that appal us—here, under the afflictions which tear the heart—here, as God puts us in his mill, and seems as though He would grind us into powder—God is educating us so that we shall take up the great enterprises of eternity and execute them to the glory of His name.

Let us take back all these utterances of repining, if they escape from our lips: and, as we submit to the discipline of our heavenly Father,

feel that "herein is love"—the God of law working out His love through the problems of law—teaching us that our love to Him, here and hereafter, is to take the form of worshipful obedience to His will. What a blessed harmony—God's love making us holy; and we, in our holiness, upholding His supremacy—God's love coming to us through the law, and making us the creatures we ought to be; and we, in the obedience and worship we render, asserting the integrity of that law, which He has Himself honored!

Last of all, how easy obedience is, when law and love are personified in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and King! The friction is clean gone between our will and our duty, when it is love that imposes the duty, and when a reciprocal love prompts to its performance. It is a wonderful conversion, where duty is turned over into privilege; when the instinct of the new life cries out to the Master in the very accents of Paul: "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" Hence, the law of grace is always "the law of liberty;" and man, the subject of divine grace, is freest when he is most bound. Happy reconciliation! God, in Heaven; man, on earth; law there, law here; love pervading law, as the atmosphere which it breathes; and man, who must always obey, finding obedience the best expression of love itself! If, brethren, our obedience is to move upon these wheels without friction, in the world above, let us teach it that inspired and heavenly motion here on earth; and begin the obedience below, which it will be our joy to render forever in heaven.

XXIV.

GOD'S GLORY, THE MEASURE OF THE BELIEVER'S SUPPLY.

PHILIPPIANS iv, 19:—"*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*"

The epistle to the Philippians is distinguished, above all the writings of the Apostle Paul, by its overflowing personal affection. He not only commends the constancy and the firmness of their faith, under circumstances of trial, but he dwells with the most grateful emphasis upon their liberality towards himself. For some reason, there seems to have existed an extraordinary attachment to the Apostle, on the part of this church at Philippi; so that, in his early ministry, twice at Thessalonica and afterwards during his long stay at Corinth, they ministered to his necessities. And now, whilst a prisoner at home, they communicate again to him, by a special messenger, sending their gifts, through the hands of Epaphroditus; who, upon his return, brings this letter which abounds with expressions of the warmest affection. "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown:" such are the terms in which the Apostle addresses this Philippian church.

These gifts, whilst they contributed to his advantage and comfort—a consideration which he by no means disdained to specify—were particularly acceptable to him, as the proof of their love to the Lord Jesus Christ, whose servant he was. This thought affords the connection with the text. "But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Jesus Christ."

Before taking up the topic of this discourse, there are two observations upon the language employed, to which I desire your attention for a moment. The first is, the loving confidence with which Paul speaks of Jehovah as "my God." Ah, brethren, the sense of personal possession heightens the sentiment of love in the human heart. It is so, even in the earthly sphere. The object which, in the distance, inflamed our desire, and towards which we have been advancing with the strongest anticipations, when it is brought actually within the possession, how

the soul rolls itself upon it in the restful contentment of its joy! I do not refer, of course, to that form of egotism which is always an evidence of weakness wherever it exists, whereby a man pushes his own self-esteem over the mere appurtenances of human life, and gloats over this and that and the other thing simply and alone because it is *his*. But I refer to that satisfaction, so restful, which we have in an object worthy of love, when we draw it to our hearts and rejoice in it, not only for what it is, but because it is also *ours*, and that nothing can come betwixt us and its enjoyment. Perhaps, in the Christian sphere this element of experience is even more conspicuous than in the earthly. How it distinguishes the young convert when the great agony is over, and he is able to lay his hand upon his pardon, and to lay that pardon in all its sweetness upon an accusing conscience and bid it be still! When, for the first moment, he can raise his eye to the blazing throne of God and say to Him in His superb majesty, "My Father!" How great is the joy of that new experience which comes simply from the sense of possession! Pardon is ours; God is ours; heaven, with its stupendous prizes, is ours; and as we contemplate these in their new relation to ourselves, the spirit is almost intoxicated with its joy. How often, too, this recurs upon us in our occasional experience, as we advance in the divine life—in those moments of sweet communion which we have with God in the closet, when He lifts upon us the light of His countenance and we can exclaim, "Thou art all my salvation and all my desire!" Until, at the last, all this effervescing affection sobers down into the permanent and steady joy of a fixed assurance that God is our God and our portion forever! With this loving confidence does Paul express himself in the text: "My God." Assured of his personal interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, he has a special sense of his covenant relations with the Father. So close indeed is the relation, that he feels Jehovah to be entirely identified with him and with his cause: and therefore he says to these Philippians, in substance, "You have been careful for me with all this care, ministering to my necessities at different times; and in the depth of my poverty I am unable to requite you for all this lavish kindness, but my God will do it for me." According to the declaration of Christ Himself when upon the earth, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"—by virtue of this identification between Christ and His people, Paul is able to refer the case to God, and say, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

The second observation is, that Paul intimates distinctly here the

believer's privilege to carry all his needs to God—the needs of the body, just as much as those of the soul—for the things which belong to this life, no less than to the life hereafter. It is thus that a large view of the Gospel protects us against that asceticism which, in all ages, has marred the beauty of Christian experience. One of the first forms of corruption which appeared after the days of apostolic purity, was asceticism; which drives its secret root down into the old Manichean error, that the flesh, simply as flesh, is the real and only seat of all the evil in the world; and that, by the maceration of the flesh, through the contempt and scorn which we pour upon it, we do exalt the spirit and purge it from all the evils which flow from its mysterious conjunction with the body. It was the fundamental mistake, from which untold corruption flowed in upon the Church. That which distinguishes man in the scale of being, is the union of matter with spirit. We are separated from the brutes beneath us, by the possession of a soul; and from the angels above us, by the possession of a material body. The place, which we occupy intermediately in the scale of creation, is marked out for us by the possession of body and soul; both of which have been redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. In both departments of our nature are we united to our blessed Head. Therefore, in the necessities of the body, no less than of the spirit, do we come in communication with our blessed Head, and with the glorious Father. As has been expressed by a commentator on this very passage, "there is a certain *solidarity* of earthly and heavenly interests, bodily and spiritual, like that which exists between the body and the soul:" and which, it might have been added, springs from this conjunction of matter and spirit which constitute man the being he is. To me it is exceedingly plain, that our filial relation to Almighty God justifies us in carrying to Him the expression of our honest desires—of course with deference to His supremacy in reference to those things which are contingent, and referring to His infinite wisdom and goodness either to bestow or to deny.

We are oftentimes blind and foolish in our asking; and our desires are often for things which would prove exceedingly hurtful to us. But if the prayer for these has been conceived in the right spirit, acknowledging ignorance in the asking, and remitting the decision, not only to the supreme will, but to the infinite wisdom of our Father in heaven, the prayer is answered in the very denial of the *special petition*. Thus we stumble upon one of those paradoxes of which the Gospel is so full; for in every instance where a true prayer from the Christian heart is denied, there is in that denial itself the answer which he really craved.

Oftentimes, too, God may deny what we desire in order the more effectually to wean us from the weak and beggarly elements of the world and teach us to set our affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. So, again, our prayer is answered; not in the communication of that specific good for which we ask, but in the substitution for it, in God's higher wisdom, of a good that is immeasurably greater. God, in the plenitude of His wisdom, and in the exuberance of His love, goes beyond the measure of our thought, and bestows upon us a blessing the greatness of which we had not the power to imagine.

Or, it may be, that we ask for things which are in themselves right and proper, which God ultimately intends to bestow; but He may see fit to exercise us in the graces of patience and of faith, and make us conspicuous witnesses of those passive virtues which, after all, are the highest adornment of the creature. For let it not be forgotten that, beyond all the glory which attaches to man's activity, by reason of the fact that he is a creature, always depending upon a power and a life superior to his own, the passive virtues, such as fortitude, patience, humility, gentleness—those graces which secure the highest encomium in God's blessed Word, are the graces which most conspicuously adorn the man.

These introductory thoughts may prove a caution against any presumptuous thought, which may be excited by considering the splendid assurance to which I now draw your attention. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." The language is intensive, the peculiar form of emphasis which Paul constantly employs in his epistles. For example, if you will turn to the Book of Ephesians, you will read: "To the praise of *the glory of his grace;*" "the forgiveness of sins, according to *the riches of his grace;*" "that in the ages to come he might show *the exceeding riches of his grace*, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus;" "unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles *the unsearchable riches of Christ;*" "that he would grant you, according to *the riches of his glory*, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man." [Ephesians i, 6, 7; ii, 7; iii, 8, 16.] And again, in the first chapter of Colossians, "to whom God would make known what is *the riches of the glory* of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

The phrase, then, the "riches in glory," is not to be flattened down into a mere hendiadys, as though the term "in glory" were simply a descriptive clause, by which the riches of God shall be qualified. It

does not mean, as some interpreters allege, the glorious riches; as though it read, "My God shall supply all your need, according to His glorious riches." The two terms are to be kept separate, in order to convey a greater emphasis of meaning. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory"—that is to say, the riches of a being who is Himself infinite in glory. And the definite pledge which Paul here makes to the Philippian Christians is, that God will supply their need, both in this world and in the world to come, just in proportion to the glory which belongs to Him. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Three thoughts will perhaps sufficiently develope this topic.

1. In the first place, *the great glory which belongs to God, is a guarantee to us that He possesses the resources from which our supply may be drawn.* He has riches to meet our need, because He is a God of glory. But how is God glorious except in the possession of His own infinite attributes—His power, His wisdom, His justice, His holiness, His truth and His love?

There is His *power*, shadowed forth in the Old Testament and in the New, under every variety of image. But perhaps the absoluteness of God's power is best conveyed to us in the act of creation; by which He produces out of nothing, so that "things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." The creative act, wholly immeasurable by human thought, we are able to grasp only as an ultimate fact, upon God's own testimony, through the power of faith. It so far transcends human reason, that philosophy in every age, untaught by revelation, has been compelled to postulate the eternity of matter. It is a fact accepted alone by faith: but which, I beg you to remember, must be accepted just as truly by our science as by our religion. Science, no less than religion, is compelled to assume the original creation of that very matter whose properties it is constantly investigating. To revelation it is indebted for the primary fact which it cannot itself explore; and which is the ring-bolt connecting all phenomena with the First Cause of their existence. It must assume this creative power, not only to produce things out of nothing, into being: but also to impress upon matter its various properties, in the exact proportions in which they are combined, and to ordain the methods by and through which these properties shall operate and produce their effects.

There is God's *wisdom*, revealed to us in all the adjustments of the natural universe, in the adaptation of means to ends, in those subtle and intricate laws which we find everywhere throughout nature; and still

more in the articulations of that stupendous system of grace, by which He brings salvation to a lost world.

There is God's *justice*, the pregnant hint of which may be found in that eternal sense of right which He has imbedded in the nature of man, and by which alone he becomes the subject of law, whether it be human or divine—that stern sense of right which is continually making its appeal to the justice that dwells in God, of which it is the reflection and the shadow. But more conspicuously is this justice of God illustrated in the salvation accomplished in conformity with all the principles of rectitude and of law.

There is God's *holiness*, revealed in the nature of those august beings who, in the splendor of their original purity, bow before His throne in heaven; but more definitely ascertained to us in the stages of our own sanctification, as we pass from grace to grace, and are at length made meet for the saints' inheritance in light.

There is God's *truth*, which forms the basis of our faith in His testimonies, and of our trust in his fidelity to His promises. And then His *love*, dimly reflected in His general goodness, as seen here upon the earth; but which finds its consummate disclosure in the blessedness and joy of the heavenly world.

And now, when you sum all these together, they constitute the glory of God, as "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders." He is the God of glory, because infinite in His power, in His wisdom, in His justice, in His holiness, in His truth and in His love: and this glory gives to us the pledge that He is able to supply the utmost necessities of His people. What want can you have on earth, whether it be of this perishing body, or of the immortal spirit—whether it be that hunger of the flesh which must supply its waste from without, or those lofty aspirations of the soul which cannot be satisfied with anything short of the vision of God, in the splendor of His majesty upon His throne—what want is there in the human soul, either on earth or in heaven, which such a God as ours cannot see and is not able to supply? With infinite power, infinite wisdom, infinite justice, infinite holiness, infinite truth and infinite love, are we not warranted in bringing all our needs and laying them down at His feet, assured that He possesses the resources from which every necessity can be met?

2. In the second place, *it is the glory of an absolutely perfect and blessed Being to communicate;* and thus we have assurance, not only of the supply, but also of the distribution. You might conceive of an infinite supply in God, but want assurance that there will be a distribu-

tion from that fulness. Now, the same glory which reposits all resources in God, will also, from the fulness which dwells in Him, communicate to all His creatures according to their various exigencies.

We should be careful in our speculations, to guard against any conception which shall impair God's absolute freedom. He is a personal being, with a personal will. When He acts, He acts under the promptings of His own nature, according to the direction of His own wisdom. When, for example, we speak of this work of creation, we are not to suppose such an internal necessity existing in the divine nature as shall, in and of itself, compel Him to the exercise of His power in producing these worlds; but we must refer His creative energy, as we do all His other operations, to the free exercise of His own will. But the fact is, that God has created; and in this glorious work He has exhibited such a profusion of power, such a plenitude of wisdom, such an exuberance of goodness, as is absolutely inconceivable. The science of four thousand years has only begun to-day to uncover the crust of this one globe, on which we walk. We have as yet only ascertained the laws which lie upon the surface, and which are obvious to our very sight. How long it will take before science shall pierce through the crust to the centre, and uncover the stupendous mysteries which are veiled before our eyes, it is impossible for any prophet to foretell. But when all the wonders of this one world of ours—which spreads itself out as a beautiful poem in our sight, and with a poetry lurking in our science far more exquisite than bards have ever embalmed in immortal verse—when all these wonders of earth are exhausted, there are the worlds innumerable which constitute our universe. Ages upon ages, which, as they accumulate upon each other, form a real eternity to human thought, may be exhausted in the investigations of these physical glories, which God, in the act of creation, has stamped upon the frame of this vast universe.

And when all this has been consumed in the progress of human study, there remain the depths of God's transcendent love, in the redemption of a lost world through Jesus Christ. In science we only touch the fringe of His robe, as Jehovah comes forth from His pavilion of light: but in the Gospel He throws open to us the portals of His infinite heart, and reveals to us the splendor of that love which sent His own Son into the world, that they who believe on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

See how this forth-putting of energy, on the part of the great God, is exhibited in producing worlds, and then in distributing over them the tokens of His favor—creating intelligent beings, with all their furniture

of reason, sensibility and taste, that they may both see and enjoy the riches of His glory! And when you have gathered this into your conception, you fill out your idea of the glory of God; in that He not only has the riches from which to supply our need, but that the very glory of this fulness impels Him to distribute according to the wants of His creatures. He is glorious in what He possesses; and He is glorious in the free communication from the fulness to us.

3. In the third place, *this glory constitutes the sphere in which this great promise is to be redeemed forever.* He will supply our need in glory. He will begin here upon the earth, in ministering to the wants of the body. He, who hears the ravens when they cry and the young lions when they roar in the forest, will provide the meat in due season for His poor children, when, in the agony of want, they are crying for their daily bread.

But it is in the world of glory, whither He will at last transfer His redeemed, that He will conspicuously and forever fulfil this promise. He will not cease the communications from His fulness, until they issue in the eternal glory of heaven. Brethren, everything about us is prophetic. Every thought, every want, every desire in the human soul, is a voice which speaks for God. No department of your nature, but points to God, as the being in whom alone its full satisfaction can be found. Hence faith, so far from deserving the scorn which men are disposed to cast upon it, becomes the essential principle which takes hold upon the fulfilment of all these predictions in the world above.

There is man's *intellect*, against which are the stores of wisdom which God has accumulated in these cabinets of nature, in order to supply material for its nourishment; that man may grow by what he learns, and may enjoy the food by which he grows. But all this is only prophetic of the eternal wisdom that dwells in God; and that the intellect is to find its full satisfaction, through eternal ages, when it shall be engaged in the exploration of the infinite in God's presence forever.

God has given to man *conscience;* and an educated conscience comes to such delicacy and refinement of perception, that it is both pained and pleased by what is absolutely impervious to the vision that is coarser. A man goes up at length with this educated conscience, and stands in the presence of the throne; and then conscience, the organ of law, the interpreter of right, the explorer of justice, finds its complete satisfaction in the infinite rectitude of Jehovah Himself, and in the administration of His perfect law over His boundless universe.

Man has a *heart*, with its immense wealth of love lying in its hidden

mines, which he may perpetually quarry and bring up the pure ore at will. He goes with these expanded affections into the presence of all that is beautiful and glorious in the person of God, and finds contentment in these.

It is not worth our while to live longer than three score years and ten if those years have, each of them, been made a stepping-stone by which we have risen higher in wisdom and higher in grace, and are prepared for the contemplation of the great God. There is no occasion of regret, my friend, if the gray hair hangs over your brow, and admonishes that the next step will be across the border, and will plant you within the circuit of that kingdom where all these glories will be developed to your view. Consider, too, that the knowledge which man gains on earth is acquired with infinite labor; whereas, in the world above, all will come just as easily as seeing. Think of the endless expansion of the powers of our nature, which we shall enjoy in the kingdom above, in order to estimate the glory in which all these wants of ours shall be supplied.

These subjects are so vast that they go beyond our reach; and we are obliged to draw down and take hold upon the small measures which time and earth afford to us. I will give you one. Take a boy of six, pouring over his multiplication table, and with almost incredible difficulty mastering the first elements of figures; and then take the man of sixty, who has ascended above the multiplication table to the comprehension of all science, is able to put his foot upon those distant stars, and walks with the imperial march of a monarch along the milky way with which God belts the sky as though it were the highway to His own palace, and see the immense stride which has been made from six to sixty. Apply this measure to the eternal world—when we have been fifty years in heaven, have gazed for fifty years upon all the glories of Jehovah, as He uncovers them to our sight; and then the fifty years after, and the fifty years after, and the fifty years after, until the accumulation of centuries swells beyond your powers of computation—and say, in the billions of the billions of the billions of years, which do not constitute the boundary of eternity, but only its beginnings, what shall be the largeness of the human intellect there? How great shall the man be who has been but a short eternity in heaven? Can any of you tell how Moses and Paul, and all those who in God's Book have disclosed His will, have grown, during the short period they in eternity have been gazing upon the splendors of Jehovah's throne? Brethren, it makes a man pant to be there. One longs to make a spring over the

gulf that separates the two worlds. If only assured that we are right; if only confident that we are the children of God; if only able to "read our title clear to mansions in the sky," one would long to be there at a bound—rejoicing that eternity is provided for his lifetime, and that God Himself, in the infinitude of His perfections, is to be the study of that eternity. Oh, say if God, whose riches are the riches in glory, shall not be able to supply our need? and if the riches of that glory will not suffice for the soul, in its endless growth and demand?

But this connects with the latter clause of the text · about which I must say two or three things. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory *by Jesus Christ.*"

This means that *the nature of these blessings is spiritual.* They are such blessings as the Lord Jesus Christ has secured by His own purchase. God will supply our need by Christ Jesus; which means, simply, that He will supply those necessities for which Christ has provided in His redeeming work of grace. Thus we trace the distinction, which is so important, practically, to us, between the asking for things which are contingent, and the asking for those things which, because they are spiritual, are absolutely certain. I am sick—I desire to be well, that I may live for my children and for society. I do not know whether it is God's will that this prayer shall be answered. I must therefore say, "If it be according to thy will, put back the figures upon the dial, and add to my life, as thou didst to Hezekiah of old." But when I come to ask of God that He will give me grace to do His will, or strength to encounter temptation, these things are already ascertained to me, as being God's will; and, therefore, I ask for them with absolute confidence. I have, with reference to these spiritual blessings, a covenant claim; and I use out that claim when I ask for the blessings which the Savior has purchased with His own blood. However doubtful, therefore, may be the earthly benefits which we desire, and which God may see fit to deny us, the spiritual blessings are secured by the oath and by the covenant of God.

Then, again, the expression, "by Christ Jesus," means that *our title to these blessings vests in Him.* All have been procured by the Savior for us, and are treasured in Him for our use. Everything that a believing soul needs, both for duty on earth and for enjoyment in heaven, already exists in the Lord Jesus, for the purpose of being communicated to us; and our title to it depends simply upon our personal union with Him. All the life, which is to constitute the immortality of the believer, Christ holds within Himself: and if he is in Christ, his title to it is absolutely

perfect. Hence the need of faith; not only, in the first instance, to lay hold upon Christ as our salvation, but to sue out the bestowal upon us of all that our title secures, until the completion is realized to us in heaven hereafter.

Then, the phrase, "by Christ Jesus," means *that Christ Himself is the measure of God's gifts to us.* When we kneel at the mercy seat, it is a great question, how far we shall go in our asking? "Oh, my Father, how much may I ask at thy hands?" The answer is, "The measure of your asking, is the gift I have already given to you in my own Son." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." [John iii, 16.] "Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." [I John iv, 10.] And again, in the language of Paul, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" [Romans viii, 32.] Ah, when the Father sought in His own bosom, and found there His only begotten Son, to whom He appealed, saying, "Who shall go for me and whom shall I send?" and when that Son, out of the depths of the Father's bosom, answered, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written, I delight to do thy will, oh my God:" in this we have the measure of what we may ask at the mercy seat. Having given us His Son, what else remains greater than that for God to withhold? "With him, he will freely give us all things," and we may ask for all blessings, up to the very throne upon which the Son sits at the Father's right hand in majesty.

Then, last of all, the expression, "by Christ Jesus," means *that He is the special agent by whom these blessings are distributed.* My brethren, it is the sweetest of thoughts, in our times of want, of depression and of grief, that the entire administration of God's gifts is now in the hands of Jesus Christ. Surely, we can afford to trust Him. If He was willing to die for us—if He went down into the bowels of the curse for us—if He poured out His soul as an offering for sins—then surely we can trust Him to withhold no good thing from us, either here or in the world to come. Our blessed Head holds in His hand all the grace by which we shall be made meet for His presence above. "All power," says Christ, "is given unto me, in heaven and upon earth." "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." "All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

How precious is the privilege of the Christian in his joint heirship with Jesus Christ! "Godliness verily hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." I know that scorn never becomes the Christian; and yet, it does require grace to silence the retort which so often comes upon our lips, when men affect contempt for the hopes we cherish. Scorn a believer! Do you not know that he is registered amongst the nobility of heaven? Do you not know that he is the peer of the angels? Do you not know that the redeemed will stand nearest to the throne of the Lamb? It is their experience which gives the keynote of that eternal chant which even the elder born sons of God shall be glad to take from their lips, when they join in the chorus: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Scorn the Christian! Ah! the devil, if he were not the basest of all hypocrites, would laugh at himself, should he undertake to pour indignity upon him whom God's grace has made a king and a priest forever in His temple. It is the Christian who rises above all conceivable dignities, and becomes an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ, to the inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, and that shall never fade away.

We may not throw back the retort; but we may, my brethren, stand up before the world, in the full assurance and glory of our new nature. We may unflinchingly look upon the scoffer, until he shall be so abashed under the concentration and rebuke of our gaze, as to quail before us. We can, if we bear within us a right sense of the glory that is to be our portion, compel even the wicked to cease their taunts; and, like Balaam of old, to say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." As conspicuous witnesses for God, and for the riches of His grace, let us bear our testimony before the world. We can fare no worse at its hands than did He who "came to his own and his own received him not:" and who has warned us "the servant is not greater than his Lord."

XXV.

VICTORY OVER TRIALS.

ROMANS viii, 37:—"*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*"

These words form an evident climax in an ascending series of thoughts. The Apostle, having fully established the doctrine of the believer's acceptance with God through the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, reckoned to him under the law and received by faith, proceeds, in this eighth chapter, to trace the benefits flowing from this perfect justification. He reaches the highest elevation to which mere logic can conduct him, in the thirty-first and thirty-second verses: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Then he breaks forth into the triumphant challenge which immediately follows: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Mark the language: it is not God that *pardoneth*, but that *justifieth*, accepteth us as righteous and just before the law. This verdict, too, proceeds from no inferior court of adjudication, but from the supreme and omniscient God, whose decisions are final and true. The Apostle then maps out the whole method of this salvation: "Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died." Where, again, you will observe the double emphasis: It is through death that the penalty of the law is taken away from the believer; and it is the death of no less a being than Christ, the God-man: and He, too, not simply a dying Savior, but one risen and interceding above, and carrying on His great trusteeship even to the end.

Who then shall separate us from the love of God, so free, so infinite, so eternal? Rapidly, and in a seven-fold specification, the Apostle enumerates the various trials to which the believer is subjected here on earth: "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" "Nay, in all these things we are more

than conquerors through him that loved us." The triumph is so complete that it can be expressed only by hyperbole. Ordinary language is wholly inadequate to sustain the majesty of the thought. Hence the agglutination of words in the text: A strong verb is undergirded and strengthened with a preposition, lest its beams should be crushed beneath the superb grandeur of the truth that is conveyed. Nay, in all these things we not only *conquer*, but we OVER-CONQUER. My purpose this morning will be simply to amplify and to illustrate this precious assurance—that in all things by which the believer is beset in life, he is at length brought off MORE THAN CONQUEROR through Jesus Christ that loved us.

1. *Our seasons of great trial are often the selected opportunities when God most reveals to us His love.* Under a perfect government, such as that of God, there can be no suffering without sin. The naturalistic view, that pain and death are but ordinations of nature, is unquestionably false in the sense that is intended. It is not nature as originally constituted of God, but it is *sinful* nature that suffers. Paul gives the true solution of all the distresses of this life, when he says, "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." [Romans v, 12.] But grace, when it delivers the believer from condemnation, does not take away immediately from the world the very being of evil, but simply changes the nature of all this evil; so that, whereas before it was penal, it now becomes disciplinary and corrective. Poverty, pain, sickness, bereavement and death, fall to the lot of the Christian, as to the lot of other men; but then the whole character of these sufferings is, to the believer, changed—and they are no longer the inflictions of divine wrath. Says the Apostle, in the twelfth chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews, "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; neverthe-

less, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." [Hebrews xii, 5-11.]

That grace, which entirely changes to the Christian the character of all the sufferings which he endures, is able also to sustain him whilst he is passing through them; and it often happens that the sorrows which we are unable to bear in the anticipation, and think that we should utterly fail if they were allotted as our portion, are precisely the sorrows in which we experience the strangest support. I remand the matter to your experience, whether the sorrows which, in the anticipation, rose before your eye, as ghastly spectres haunting the imagination, and filled you with a supernatural terror, have not been the sorrows which you were able to sustain with almost perfect equanimity, when they were rolled upon you in the Providence of God. Not only so; but, in the heaviest of our afflictions, God oftentimes reveals most to us His personal presence, and fills us with the divinest comfort. Is not this to *overconquer?* It is not mere victory, but it is triumph, when in the bosom of our deepest anguish we have the nearest approach to our infinite Father; when in our deepest woe He opens to us the greatness of His heart, and reveals His infinite love; when, according to the language of the ancient prophet, He "allures us into the wilderness," in order that He may there "speak comfortably to us." [Hosea ii, 14.] It is the high prerogative of grace to go down with us into the deepest of our trials, and there to uncover to us the secrets of God's love.

2. *These trials enter into character, and render us more athletic—more competent to serve God whilst we live, and to enjoy Him hereafter in heaven.* Grace is not so much a doctrine taught, as it is a history wrought. Indeed I might extend the proposition, that when the great God undertakes to unfold His infinite perfections, it is by no poor, weak, didactic exposition; but in the actual outworking, before the eyes of His creatures, of all the splendors of His power. When, for example, He would reveal to us the greatness of His power, He does it by a practical exhibition. By a single word He builds up a universe of worlds; and then creates intelligent beings who may investigate their wonders, and in the march of science trace the footsteps of His majesty and His glory. Therefore it is that religion stretches out her hands and pronounces her benison upon science, and bids her go forward in her researches: for all these paths of science are but the highways which are cast up from earth to heaven, by and upon which we travel onward and forward to the city of our great King, and to that glorious palace in which He enthrones Himself.

Thus, when Christ appeared upon the earth, it was not merely as a teacher. He was all that, but He was infinitely more. He came from the bosom of the Father, not simply to unfold truth, but actually to make that truth—in the facts of His own personal history, as they were wrought out from the manger to the tomb. Equally so, my brethren, when grace is brought to us and we are made partakers of it, we learn that grace not merely from the didactic teachings of a book, but by having it wrought in our individual experience. The Lord Jesus Christ, in the experiences of all His people, is Himself reproduced; and it is Christ in us, who is the hope of glory. All the graces which adorn the Christian character—faith, love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, temperance, hope—all these were, in the first instance, procured by our Lord Jesus Christ through His passion and by His death. They are all stored in Him as the treasury in which they are reposited; and the Holy Ghost, communicating to us the life which is in Christ, imparts these as operative principles, to be developed within us according to the law of all life. Hence all the trials to which we are subjected in this life, do actually go into the character. It is not merely idle, but sinful, for any Christian man to complain of the discipline under which he is placed in the Providence of Almighty God. There is a needs be, according to the fundamental principles of the divine government, that he shall know God, and know the grace of God, and know the salvation of God, as these matters become facts in his own personal history. We are placed in those precise circumstances, in which all these different graces shall be tested and exercised; and as they are developed within us, they become the permanent attributes of Christian character. Thus we grow up, from the feebleness of infancy unto "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ Jesus."

I suppose, my brethren, that the devil is just about the most disappointed being in all the universe. For when the Master appeared upon the earth, under the pressure of his malignity, he confronted Him, at the very opening of His public ministry, in the wilderness, with his three temptations; and then tracked Him through the three years of His public ministry, everywhere stirring up Jew and Gentile, and allying them in conspiracy against Him who alone was pure and sinless upon the earth. When at last he triumphed, and the man of sorrows hung upon the accursed tree, there was a jubilee in hell; and all the hosts of evil rose with their peans of joy, that at length their king and lord had conquered. But how little did Satan and his confederates dream that, in thus bruising the heel of the woman's seed, his own head was to be

crushed forever! How little did Satan, with all his craft and intellectual power, dream that, in accomplishing the death of our Lord, he was only securing the salvation of a lost world, effecting all the methods of divine grace and the ultimate overthrow of his own wretched kingdom! And when Satan pursues the Christian with all the temptations by which he is harassed, and mingles his agency in all the sufferings he endures, how strange the end to him—when these very devices are overruled by the Spirit and grace of Almighty God, to promote the future and final advancement of the saint! When, at the end of this dispensation, Satan, in the depth of his woe, shall look at the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, who chant the praise of Him who has redeemed them with His blood, and made them kings and priests unto God and in His temple forever, he will gnash his teeth, not only in the exuberance of his rage, but in the passion of his disappointment, that his very contrivances against the Church and people of God have only pushed them higher in promotion, and rendered them more athletic to engage in the service of God in the kingdom of his glory. Tell me, then, if it is not to *more than conquer*, when all the things which reason construes to be against us, are found in the end to be for us; when all these afflictions "work out for us the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

3. *These trials, because they are disciplinary, are temporary; and therefore are to us, whilst we endure them, the pledges of an eternal exemption from all pain.* Christians, though saved, are still sinners. We are obliged to say, with Paul, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity unto the law of sin which is in my members." [Romans vii, 23.] So constant and severe is the conflict, that we often exclaim, in the same passionate language with himself, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Now, brethren, if, though saved, we still confess to our Father in heaven that we sin in thought, word and deed, is there not a needs-be that we shall suffer? Nay, the more certain it is that we are saved, the more certain it is that God loves us, the more certain it is that we are the children of God, and all around us bear their free testimony to the fact—all the more necessary is it upon these very grounds, that God should vindicate His perfect holiness by exhibiting His abhorrence of the sins which His people commit Sin, as committed by them, has in it an aggravation which does not characterize that of the unpardoned transgressor. When the Christian sins, he sins against grace; he sins against love; he sins against the

very heart of that Father, upon whose bosom he so fondly leans; he sins against the knowledge of God's love, as conveyed to him in the pardon of his sins; he sins against his own experience of the sweetness of pardon, as it has been often sealed by the Spirit upon his own conscience. There is an aggravation in the sins which are committed by believers, which would, unless grace intervened, all the more rigidly draw upon their head the judgment of eternal wrath.

Now if, because delivered from condemnation, their sufferings cannot be penal, it is right that God should still, in the very salvation of His own, show that He is a holy God; and reveal, in the current of their history, His just displeasure against their sins. I do not know how your mind is affected by it, but it is a thought which deserves to be most earnestly revolved: that pain and sickness, bereavement and sorrow, and all the trials of this life, are to be accepted as a blessing, as a gift of love, as a matter of congratulation and praise—if, by and through it all, the God of infinite purity shall vindicate His own holiness against those aspersions which human unworthiness and sin are continually throwing upon it. There is no merit in the suffering which God's children endure, for we are saved purely through the operation of God's grace. But if there can run a scarlet line all through the experience of the saint upon the earth, which shall be the vindication of the holiness and purity of God—then the sufferings of the righteous are just and proper, and, in a spiritual view of them, are occasions of thanksgiving. Why, even the angels, who have never sinned, veil their faces before the throne, and thereby show that the distance which separates them from the holiness of God is unapproachable. While we are still sinners, though pardoned, it is just that these disciplinary chastisements of our Heavenly Father should rest upon us. It is right that He should the more conspicuously show Himself to be a God of purity, whilst He is magnifying to us the greatness of His salvation. I apprehend that, in part, you are to find in this the solution of the great fact which is declared to be the law of Christ's kingdom: that they who are brought into a state of grace, so far from being exempt from trial, are to expect a larger share of it in this world. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you;" "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." [I Peter i, 7; iv, 12.]

But now mark: if these sufferings of the righteous here upon the

earth are merely corrective and disciplinary, they must, from the nature of things, be restricted to this period of probation. Whilst, perhaps, excruciating to the flesh, they become sweet pledges to us that, by and by, we shall be exempt forever. Oh, the power of divine grace, which can take even torture and convert it into praise! To the sinner unconverted and unrepentant, all the pains, slight or heavy, which he may experience, are faithful warnings to him of the suffering that is to be hereafter. All the pains which a wicked man endures upon the earth, are the voice of God to him. "In measure, when it shooteth forth, he may debate with it: for he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind." But in the day of His retributive justice, when He shall let loose from His hand all the rough winds of His fury, these earthly pains and trials will be discovered to have been but types and prophecies of the worm that shall never die, and of the fire that shall never be extinguished. But we, brethren, who belong to Jesus, read the reverse inscription upon the sorrows which we endure. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." [II Corinthians iv, 17.] "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." [Isaiah liv, 8.] In the midst of all that is painful upon earth, we read the pledge that by and by we shall be exempt from all these sufferings, and shall sit down "in his presence where is fulness of joy, and at his right hand where are pleasures forevermore." It is sweetly written of the redeemed in heaven, "They shall hunger no more; neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes:" "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.' [Revelations vii, 17; xxi, 4.] Brethren, is not this to *over-conquer;* when the very trials, by which we are overtaken in the flesh, become the pledges to us of the eternal rest, in the temple not made with hands eternal in the heavens?

4. *If sharers in our Lord's humiliation, we shall hereafter share with Him in His exaltation and reward; all the glory of which shall be reflected upon us.* I suppose that in heaven we shall be happy, not only in our individual holiness and bliss, but that the aggregate joy of all will be the possession of each. I am perfectly aware that these great things cannot be conveyed to any mind by abstract utterances. We

must creep up to these heights by the aid of those experiences which we have here upon the earth. By these analogies we lift ourselves, as by the aid of wings, to some conception of the glory which shall be ours in the kingdom above. Take a happy family; and how true it is, in that little circle, that the happiness of each member is the happiness of all, and how true it is, that the happiness of all is the happiness of each. Each child is not only happy in the possession of his own personal virtues, but in the contribution to the happiness of those who are around him; and there is an atmosphere of joy and of delight which he is continually breathing. In a well constituted household, living upon principles of love, the happiness of the combined circle forms the happiness, really, of each member of that circle. Thus is it with the communion f the saints in heaven. We shall be happy, not only with the happiness which is peculiarly and personally our own, but we shall have a mysterious power to draw in the happiness of all the redeemed and all the angels, who constitute the glorious family of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head. The aggregate happiness of all the glorified above will be poured in measure into the experience of each individual of the redeemed.

If this be true in regard to the communion which we have with those who are like ourselves in the kingdom above, it but faintly images to us the intimacy and sweetness of the communion we shall have with our Divine Head, Jesus Christ Himself. Do you not know that we are not only to be heirs of God, but joint-heirs with Christ? My brethren I am impelled to pause, that you may have time to dwell upon the significance of the expression, "JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST." Think of the resources of His wisdom: think of the amazing stretch of His power: think of the actual work He accomplished upon the earth, in satisfying the claims of justice and of law: think of the majesty of the step with which He went up through the clouds into the presence of His eternal Father, and took possession of the glory which He had with Him before the world was: think of the dignity of His session at His Father's right hand, when He takes the mediatorial sceptre and wields it over the myriads of saints and angels in heaven, and over the ten thousand times ten thousand of the redeemed upon the earth: think of all the glory which belongs to the eternal Son, who, because He is the only begotten, is the eternal Heir: and then think that you and I are made joint-heirs with Christ, according to His own declaration, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." [Rev. iii, 21.] Oh! when

Christ in His glory sheds down upon us the honor and the reward; and His Spirit enlarges thought and desire and affection, throughout eternity we shall draw in, as by a holy inspiration, the glory which is to be ours. Thus shall we have communion with our Head—communion with Him in His glory, as truly as upon earth we had communion with Him in His sorrow and in His shame; knowing Him equally in "the power of his resurrection," as in "the fellowship of his sufferings."

I must be indulged a word or two upon the closing clause of the text: "In all these things we are more than conquerors *through him that loved us.*" I have time for only two thoughts, which I will simply indicate without expansion.

The first is, that *all this victory is achieved, not by our innate strength, but by His strength as it is given to us.* "We are more than conquerors *through him that loved us.*" It is *through* resolution, and *through* will, that we conquer; but not *by* it. The victory is achieved, not by the strength which is innate in us, but by that divine strength which comes to us from the divine life that is imparted to us from our Divine Head, by His own blessed Spirit. The uniform mistake of the world, in all its schemes of reform, is its reliance upon the strength of human resolution alone to break the bonds of vicious habit. The only power by which man can triumph over evil, is the power of divine grace. The only victory which a man shall achieve over his passions and his lusts, is through the strength imparted to him by the Holy Spirit. We are chasing the will-o'-the-wisp, led by a false light, whenever we trust in schemes of reformation which found simply upon the power of the human will; and which are operated by those purely earthly motives ordinarily influencing human conduct. Let us, who have been brought into the kingdom of our Redeemer, testify that it is by the power of our Divine Head alone we conquer in all things; and that if we expect to be made more than conquerors at the last, it will be through Him that loved us —who hath washed us in His own blood, and who will make us kings and priests before His throne and in His temple forever.

The second thought is, that *our triumph over all the trials of life will be accomplished through the power of love*—"through him that loved us." The great assurance that we shall at last be superior to sin and Satan, is found in the fact that this Gospel had its origin in the eternal love of God. God's love first undertook the problem of sin, and has solved all the mysteries of grace and accomplished the redemption of our race. Love never allows itself to be defeated. The power of God we know to be infinite, and that it is able to bend all things resistlessly to His

holy purpose. The wisdom of God, we know, has resources with which to adjust everything to the accomplishment of His will. But when underneath this power, and penetrating this wisdom, we find the love of God prompting Him to undertake the redemption of our world, and devising this scheme of grace, we are certain that it is incapable of defeat. All the powers of earth and of hell may combine against it; but love must triumph at last. Why, it is the principle which triumphs even in the human sphere. By just so much as we are beings of love, do we master all obstacles and achieve great results. And when the great love of God has undertaken the problem of sin, you may be certain that He will solve every difficulty, and secure the salvation of His people in perfect consistency with His own holiness and truth. The sweet thought comes as the result, that you and I, in our striving with sin and in our conflicts with the world, are co-operating with God in love to solve these mighty problems which He has Himself undertaken. It is by the power of the personal affection which we have towards God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Redeemer, that we are able to come off more than conquerors in His blessed name. If we desire power to overcome the world, we must find it in the depth of the affection which the Holy Spirit has produced in our hearts towards our exalted Head.

There are just two things which I desire to say, in bringing these remarks to one definite conclusion.

The first is, that *religion is worth a good deal more than philosophy.* God forbid that I should despise the latter. It has been the habit of my life to sit in the school of philosophy, and to learn all that she could teach. I admire the principle which she inculcates—the best that she has—when she strengthens a man's will to bear up against the inevitable: when, with her voice of wisdom, she shows how foolish it is to sit down complaining of trials which it is not possible any of us shall escape. I admire the greatness of that resolution which shall gird itself to the discharge of all the high duties which devolve upon us in life, and shall patiently endure all that man is called upon to suffer here below. But, at the very best, all that philosophy can do is simply to teach us to *endure.* Christianity enables us to *triumph!* "I glory in tribulation!" Where is the philosophy that ever said anything in comparison with this? Bring before you all the schools; bring them out of the Academy, bring them from the Porch, let it be Epicurean, or Platonic, or Aristotelian: where is the master that ever taught the soul to say, when it was quivering in its anguish, "I glory in tribulation;

knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." [Romans v, 3-5.]

As for myself, I am ambitious to be a conqueror. I desire to walk this earth with the firm tread of a man who feels that he is superior to it —superior to its pleasures, superior to its pains, superior to its penalties, superior to its judgments, superior to its accusations. Wherever I plant my foot on this globe, I desire to feel that I am its master. When I go through the gateway of death, may it be with the step of one who knows he triumphs; who is able to say, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." When I walk the streets of the heavenly city, I wish to march with the elastic step, and with the erect stature and bold mien, of one who feels that he is MORE THAN CONQUEROR through Him that loved him. It is the Gospel and the grace of God alone that make a man superior to himself, superior to the world, stronger than Satan and all his allies, and certain that he will tread him at last beneath his feet. Philosophy is worth what it is. Let it have all the applause it deserves. But let us bring the triumphs of philosophy and lay them upon the altar of the Gospel, and bless God that He gives us a grace which is superior to all the principles of human wisdom.

In the second place, *let us make the most of our trials.* They may be severe; but in this severity, they may be the particular form in which it pleases our Father that we shall give our testimony. In that case our sorrow is our glory. There is many a bed-ridden saint, who for years has been tossing upon the couch of weariness and of pain, and experiencing a thousand martyrdoms. He is a witness for the grace of God. He is, as truly as Daniel in the lions' den, a prophet for God. He is, as truly as the three children in the flames of the furnace, a witness for God. Oh! it is a crown, brother, for you, not of shame nor of dishonor, if, in the patient endurance of affliction and reproach, you are able to turn to God and feel that he will at last make you MORE THAN CONQUEROR through Him that loved you. Do not be afraid, in the utmost severity of God's discipline, that He will pass the bounds of a just measure. The human heart is like a harp, and all these affections are but the chords of that harp: and the only being who knows skilfully to play upon that harp, is He that made it. If He, the Master of the song, turns the screw, and strains the chord even until it threatens to snap, do not fear. "The man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," who went

down into the bowels of the curse for our redemption—He is the musician whose hands are upon the chords and keys of this mysterious instrument. He will turn those screws, and stretch those chords to the point when they should crack and part. But no, He only brings them to the right tension; so that when His blessed finger shall sweep across the strings, each shall give its proper note—and all shall blend in eternal harmony of praise unto "HIM THAT LOVED US."

XXVI.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY IN RELIGION.

ROMANS xiv, 12:—"*So then every one shall give account of himself to God.*"

From the infirmity of unsanctified human nature, the causes of contention must exist even in the Church of God. It is perhaps impossible for any of us to free ourselves entirely from the bias of early education: so that our mere prejudices are consecrated by the power of association, and become as sacred as though they were principles. Different measures, too, of Christian knowledge, and various degrees of Christian faith, involve divisions of opinion and of practice, which constantly call for conciliation and forbearance. The apostolic writings, therefore, abound with precepts in reference to this matter; of which you have an example in the entire chapter from which the text is taken. All of them insist that, whilst no conscientious conviction ought ever to be surrendered, yet we must be careful not to push our self-assertion to the rupture of Christian brotherhood. The Gospel had indeed abrogated the distinction of days and meats, which belonged to an extended ritual like that of the Jews; but it was not to be expected that those who were emancipated from the bondage could, at once, equally appreciate their liberty in Christ Jesus. Paul hence teaches in this chapter that the enlightened must bear with the scruples of the weak; whilst the weak must not attempt to enforce their scruples upon the strong. Since both had been alike received by the Lord, they must receive each other; and every attempt made by either party to judge the other, was simply an invasion of His prerogative who is the sole lord of the conscience. For all must at length stand before the judgment seat, and each one must give account of himself to God.

Such is the precise connection in which the text is found; but I appropriate it this morning, not for the purpose of discussing any points of Christian casuistry, but to enforce the great truth which is contained in the language itself: "So then every one shall give account of himself to God." The subject of this discourse will therefore be THE INDIVID-

UAL RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY MAN UNTO GOD, IN THE MATTER OF PERSONAL RELIGION. Perhaps, my hearers, the proposition is accepted by you upon the bare statement. But, unfortunately, the truths which are the most easily admitted, are the truths which most easily escape from us. They glide through the mind with a serpentine ease; and are as barren of results as though they were algebraic formulas which have no determinate value of their own. It is well, therefore, sometimes to hold an accepted truth before the mind at least long enough to secure its attention; and I propose this morning to spread before you the evidence of this proposition, upon at least four lines of thought.

1. *This individual responsibility is established by the existence and operations of conscience.* In does not affect my present purpose in what particular view you regard conscience; whether you look at its simple acts, or as these are gathered up into a moral habit; or whether you choose to ascend above these, into the faculty itself out of which they spring. Nor does it concern me here to discuss whether conscience be a single and independent power, or whether it be only the complement of all our faculties, when they are employed upon moral subjects. The ultimate fact, lying behind all these different theories, is sufficient for my purpose: that all men do discriminate between the right and the wrong; that all men have conceptions of law and duty; that all men experience certain emotions upon the contemplation of duty—emotions of complacency or of shame when the actions are their own—emotions of approval or of censure, when the actions are those of another. Just as the discrimination of color proves the faculty of sight; or as the distinction of sound proves the faculty of hearing; or of softness or hardness that of touch; or as the distinction of sour and sweet proves the faculty of taste: just so, this distinction universally prevailing between the right upon the one hand, and the wrong upon the other, proves the existence of conscience as the moral faculty by which these judgments are rendered. Or if you choose to rise above the sensible sphere into that which is spiritual—just as the distinction between true and false proves intelligence; just as the distinction between the beautiful and the vile establishes the fact that we possess sensibility and taste: just so, these distinctions which obtain throughout the whole race, establish the fact that man possesses a moral nature, of which this conscience is recognized as the organ.

Nor do I care to perplex the line of thought upon which I am attempting to run, by raising any question as to the sufficiency of conscience to be the guide of moral actions; whether its decisions are in

themselves fallible or infallible; whether this conscience requires a standard for its guidance, or what that standard should be—whether the perfect law of God, or our sense of the fitness and propriety of things, or whether it be simply the fluctuating opinions of those who are around us in life. It is of no sort of consequence to me, just now, whether conscience be enlightened or ignorant, whether it be perverted or sound, whether its decisions be correct or incorrect. I argue simply from the existence of the faculty, and from its uniform exercise wherever we discover a member of the human family. The point, which I signalize in reference to these actings of conscience, is that every conception of duty or of law, is our *individual* conception; and that every emotion and every volition, into which that conception may terminate, is *our* emotion and *our* volition: showing that in all these matters which come under the jurisdiction and cognizance of conscience, men stand in an individual, personal relation to God, out of whose nature all these moral distinctions originally spring. The fact, therefore, that there is such a power as conscience found in every member of the human race, whatever be the decisions rendered by it, shows the individuality of man; and that, in all these moral and religious matters, he stands personally before that God before whom he shall at last appear in the judgment. "So then every one shall give account of himself to God."

2. *Every man is locked up within the limits of his own personality; which cannot be invaded from without, and which cannot be entirely transcended by himself.* Mr. Locke says, "Every thinking, intelligent being is a person;" and you recall the celebrated dictum of Descartes, "I think, therefore I am;" where the consciousness of thought proves existence—a principle which is laid at the foundation of his entire philosophy. But man not only thinks; he also feels. Emotions arise with all their glow from the friction of thought; and then, by the law which determines these emotions, they themselves form into determinate choices or preferences of the will; until at length all these concrete in the overt act. Hence it comes that the actions of a man are the only criteria, by which beings who are not omniscient are able to judge. It is because the actions which proceed from us, truly denote the character out of which they spring. For these acts result as the product of all those powers that are within us. They represent our processes of thought, all the emotions which we experience, and the determinations of our will. So that these external acts stand up before the eye, and will be carried up with us before the judgment throne, as the memorials of what we are: and it is competent only to the omniscient, to look behind these

and read the secret character and nature lying back of them, which determine their quality.

Now, every man not only possesses this complement of faculties, but in every man they stand in precisely the same relation to each other. It is possible to shut down the gates at each one of these processes, and arrest the whole procedure; and just there comes in man's responsibility for all that he thinks, for all that he feels, for all that he determines, and for all that he does. Each may be as secretive as he pleases. He may lock the gates and shut out every other being, save God. There is not that power on earth or in hell, which can unbar those gates and invade the privacy of a man's own soul, when he chooses to retreat within the seclusion of his own being. Men sometimes allege that they are not responsible for their own thoughts, because thought is free, and moves upon its own wing with as large a liberty as the birds which sweep through the air. Again, they profess to have no power over their feelings; because, from the very constitution of man's nature, the emotions are involuntary and do not obey the bidding of the will. Thus they seek to escape responsibility for all that is passing secretly within them; and only admit a responsibility for the acts which flow out, as the result, before the eyes of the world. But this is contrary to all human experience; since in every day of every man's life, he is consciously shutting up the gates upon his thoughts, either arresting that thinking entirely, or turning its current into a new and distinct channel. Analyze what you do, through any single day of your life, in the transactions with your fellow-men, and you will discover that you have within you the power to arrest this current of thought, and to turn it at will into any channel you yourself may prefer. It is what the wicked are doing every day, in reference to divine and spiritual things; for, by the religious constitution of the human soul—wherein consists the signature and seal of the image of God in which we are created—it is not possible that a man shall be absolutely destitute of religious thought. But the instant these thoughts rise to the point where they become disagreeable, man shuts down instantly upon his thinking; turns, by an effort of the will, his attention in new directions; and causes his thoughts to flow in channels which he himself cuts out for them. So, when the emotions become painful to us, we suppress them by turning away from the contemplation of that by which they were produced. Before thought and feeling can possibly represent themselves in any decision of the will, or in any external act, the sinner arrests the entire proceeding of grace and

grieves away the Holy Spirit, by whom alone he can be sealed unto the day of redemption.

It is upon this principle that religious experience is developed in those who are truly devout, and the particular exercises are produced which they desire. It is not possible, from the law of our spiritual economy, that we s all immediately control either our emotions or our desires; but we can compel the attention to those objects which shall produce the feeling we desire, so that we shall rejoice in the experiences of Christian comfort and holiness. And so, by constantly meditating upon the great things of God's law, and the still richer utterances of His grace, the heart glows like a coal of juniper, and is alive with grateful praise to the God of its salvation.

Now observe that, in all this, our emotions do not arise from another man's thoughts, but from our own. If the emotions which we ourselves experience are at all traceable to those of any other party, it is only as they are appropriated by us and made *our* thoughts and *our* volitions. Thus are we individual persons, locked up within the limits of this personality; and no being from without has the power to invade the privacy to which we shut ourselves up.

The other branch of the thought is equally plain, and still more fully attested to us: the inability to transcend the limits of our own personality, so as perfectly to express ourselves to any other being. Even in so cold a thing as thought, human experience attests the inadequacy of language perfectly and infallibly to render it, so that it shall pass from one mind safely to another mind. A very curious illustration of this may be found in the barbarous jargon of the law. Go into any court of justice, or into any hall of legislation, as the law is being enacted, or as the law is being applied, and say if your ear is not absolutely stunned by the uncouth dialect employed. And yet the whole is but an artful device to render language so precise that the most subtle sophistry shall not be able to evade the meaning intended to be conveyed. With all this attempt, however, at the most perfect precision in language, our courts are filled with perpetual wrangling as to the import of those very instruments which are couched in language constructed to exclude the possibility of doubt. So difficult is it for man to construe his thought, and put it in bodily form before the eye of another, so that he shall infallibly gather his meaning and be protected from every error.

When you rise from the thought to the emotion that springs out of it, language utterly fails to express its intensity. If you will look at the language of feeling, you will discover that it is from beginning to end

the language of analogy. Poetry alone can be its vehicle, because poetry deals in the imagery drawn from the material world by which strong affections may be delineated. You may, for example, express the *bare fact* of your sympathy in a cold word, the cast-iron mould into which that sympathy is thrown; but it is not within human power to pour into any word the depth of feeling which that sympathy desires to unfold. Not by the use of natural symbols, nor by all the arts of pantomime, nor by all the conventional signs which have been invented for the interpretation of thought, can any of us succeed in perfectly delivering to another the contents of our spirit. So true is it that we are locked up within ourselves. Each one lives, even when surrounded by myriads of his race, as securely as in a castle; and cannot himself throw the drawbridge over the moat that surrounds it, and go forth to licentiousness of intercourse with his race.

But is there no being in this vast universe who has the key to such a nature as this? Must there not be one at least, the august and blessed Creator of us all?—He that framed us in His own image, and stamped the reflections of His own attributes upon these intellectual and moral powers—must not the great God, at least, hold in His hand the key by which He shall open these chambers of the human soul, and walk at will through all these processes of the understanding and of the affections? Thus we are brought into a closer relationship with God, the Supreme Person, who has put upon us the impression of His own image in a personality which makes us sacred.

3. *This great fact is established by the very notion we have of society, of government and of law.* Society is not made by the aggregation of individuals, but by their fusion. The collective units must be brought into relations; and it is by the relationship subsisting between them that it is constituted. The only way in which society can be improved is by acting upon the elements which compose it; and it becomes degenerate through the corruption of its parts. However you may organize public opinion and seek to give it tone, it shall be a power for good only as its pressure is felt by the individuals upon whom it is brought to bear.

Government, too, from its lowest to its highest development, touches the individual everywhere: and law addresses its counsels and its sanctions to the personal conscience. So that, if God has a government at all, we must lie singly under its protection, and be amenable singly to its authority. From these general notions of society, of government and of law, we are compelled to infer our individual relations with God, the Supreme Lawgiver; who, in the administration of His authority,

holds us to a strict personal responsibility for all our acts of obedience or of transgression.

4. *This truth is even more conclusively proved by the methods of grace, as revealed in the Gospel of Christ.* He becomes the legal substitute—not of the race in the aggregate, but only of individuals out of the race; bearing their sins in His own body upon the tree, and making atonement for individual guilt and transgression. It is His own seed, which the Father gave to Him in the covenant of redemption, whose individual names are written in the Lamb's book of life, and for whom He intercedes before the throne of His Father in glory—saying, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." [John xvii, 9] It is to the individual man this Gospel comes with its personal call; addressing to him alone the command and the promise, "Believe *thou* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou* shalt be saved." The faith, by which Jesus is received as a Savior, is a faith exercised by each man for himself, and not for another. Repentance is the bitterness of the soul's grief over its own sins, and the supplication for divine pardon—the sense of which shall be sealed upon it alone. We are individually renewed by the Holy Ghost, each being consciously quickened from death to life. The Holy Spirit accomplishes within each believer the work of sanctification. We go singly and alone through the valley of the shadow of death, putting down our feet as they touch the waters of that cold river. And each soul at last is separately glorified; when it is seated with Christ upon His throne, even as He obeyed His Father's will and was set down upon His throne.

From this rapid sketch of its projecting features, without descending into the details of the scheme, see how grace deals directly with the individual, and works in him the great change by which he is fitted for heaven. And as this system is purely remedial, it establishes the truth of man's personal accountability under the law, from whose condemnation the believer is discharged. So that, under every aspect of the case, it holds true that "every one must give account of himself to God." I do not care to run the proof beyond the specifications I have already made. But there are several important conclusions flowing from this important fact, which it will be well, in conclusion, to consider.

1. *We see the immense difficulty in the way of the Gospel's final triumph.* It must overtake each individual of the human family, and bear to him alone the offer of eternal life. Each separate soul of all the millions that in a single generation cover the earth, this scheme of grace

must search out and carry to it the overtures of divine love The resistance of each one must be separately overcome. Not only must that first resistance be overborne, which is encountered at the threshold; but the Gospel must go down into the interior nature of every man, and "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

You ask me for evidence that Christianity is divine—that its origin is of God. I fling out this as one of the signs meeting you at its very gates—the august conception of a scheme which undertakes to subdue the myriads upon myriads of the human family; and when its triumph shall be complete, pledges itself that there shall not arise one rebellious thought, or insurrectionary desire, in a single bosom of all the redeemed. Think of the glory of the achievement, when not only all these countless individuals are subdued under the power of divine grace, but when every movement of every heart, every pulse of every thought, becomes perfectly obedient to the law of Jesus Christ.

Well, brethren, this does not begin to sketch the difficulty of the task. For if Christianity should succeed in controlling thus a single generation, the whole work has to be gone over again with the generation that comes after—and then with the generation that comes after—and so on till the great trumpet shall sound, and the heavens be rolled together as a scroll, and the earth with all the works that are in it shall be burned up. The work undertaken by the Church of God is never done, but always in the process of being done. Therefore you and I must not stagger, nor give way to impatience or petulance; but day after day, year after year, our flagging energies must be summoned to carry forward this cause of our Master until it shall triumph over the globe.

Will this constant call for tribute to the Master's treasury never cease? and this agony of effort to push forward the banner of the King, will it never end? No, my brethren; as long as there is a lost soul upon the earth, the Church, like the woman in the parable, must light her candle and look diligently through the house, until the lost piece of silver is found. As long as there is one sheep of the fold straying upon the dark mountains of idolatry, to the distant ends of the earth must this Church of God travel in her weariness, in her sorrow and in her toil, until that lost lamb is placed in the arms of the Shepherd and King. To the end, my brother, to the end—until you sleep in death, there is to be no end to your giving, no ceasing of your activity, no rest from your toil—to the very end, until the cry is heard, "It is enough; come up higher," "enter into the joys of your Lord;" where you shall find, in

the long and sweet eternity that succeeds, full compensation for all the sacrifices which you were called to make here upon the earth.

Considering what man is, in his fallen state—and what combinations are formed to arrest this Gospel, and spread temptations and snares around every man's feet—I do not wonder that the Gospel has such difficulty in winning its triumphs. We can only fall back upon the great promise which has so long been the song of prophecy, when "every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

2. The second inference from this great fact is *the folly of attempting to rely upon foreign helps in the matter of our personal salvation.* In the epidemic of 1867, I was called to the bedside of a young man whom I found in the utmost frenzy of fear. He clasped his hands and said, "I shall soon be in eternity, and I am not ready." In a storm of apprehension he tossed from side to side upon his couch, the very excitement sealing his earthly fate, which was rapidly approaching. "Will you say anything to me? Will you pray for me?' I prayed for him once and again. Then he turned upon me with that concentration of gaze which is only seen in the eye that opens upon the powers of the eternal world, and said, "Is there any meeting going on in any of the churches, that I may have a chance to get religion?" What could I say to him but this: "Ah, you must not rely upon anything of that sort now. Your salvation lies between your own soul and God, and you have no need of any meeting in this or that church. Here is the Savior, who comes to you with the promise, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' Gather up your thoughts in the few moments that are left you, and cast your soul upon that Redeemer. Cry out to Him, as Peter did when sinking in the waters, 'Lord, save or I perish;' and feel that nothing can deliver you from these terrible apprehensions, but the cross of Jesus Christ." He continued from that moment to cry out, "'Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me;' save me by thy blood and cross, and pardon my sins." As the day declined towards the evening, he broke out in the song, "He is mine; my sins are pardoned; I feel that I am accepted, and that I shall pass into rest." You ask what judgment I pronounce upon such a case. I answer I have no judgment to render. Only, God forbid, that I should limit His precious grace; God forbid, that I should step between the Savior who, in His dying agonies, said to the thief upon the cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise," and any soul which, in its anguish, cries out, "Lord, save or I perish."

But the utterance of that young man affords an illustration of the tendency, which we all manifest, to rely upon foreign helps in the salvation of the soul. Many a youth, whirling in the gayeties or, perhaps, the dissipations of the world, builds his hope upon the piety of parents who possibly are now in glory. His inward thought is, "I will have for a while my swing, and drink my fill of the pleasures of life; for my godly parents, who bore me in their arms when the seal of the covenant was imprinted upon my forehead, will stand me between and eternal ruin." Or, an ungodly husband, absorbed in the cares of business, is secretly fastening his hope upon the intercessions of the poor, weak woman at home; who, in the secrecy of her closet, is weeping over his waywardness and folly, and beseeching God to turn him from darkness into light. Sinner, I dare not say to you that those prayers will not be heard of God; and that, through them, you may not at the last be brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son. But I do say it is a most fearful peril you encounter, when you stake your soul upon such a hazard. In the matter of salvation God admits no proxies. He deals with you directly; and in this conviction you must turn with repentance and believe on Him who alone can save.

3. There is another, and it is inevitable: that *a man shall not be able, at the judgment, to lay the blame of his ruin upon any but himself.* How often do men say, "If it had not been for such a tempter, who caught me in the hour of my weakness with the solicitation to which I was most prone; had it not been for evil companions, who led me astray from the paths of virtue, I might now be singing with the saved who are in the Church of God." Ah, that tempter, who is willing to be Satan's vicegerent, and to do Satan's meanest work on earth, will bear his own crime and experience his own doom from the Judge. But there will be no escape from our own responsibility. It is through the consent of our own will that we succumb under the power of any temptation; and we must render our own account at the bar of judgment.

Sometimes men even venture to throw the blame upon God. "If I had not been thrown into just such circumstances; if, in the outworking of my life as God Himself arranged it, I had not been brought under this enormous pressure of care, I might have had leisure to think of eternity and have found salvation." My hearer, there is no pressure of business upon you which you have not voluntarily assumed. You bear no other pressure, except what you choose to sustain: and there can be no discharge from your personal responsibility in the premises. So, then, each one of us must give account of himself to God.

And now, my hearers, with this tremendous truth, which cannot be uttered with greater emphasis than in the language of the text itself, I leave the question for you to answer, what is the account which you are making up for that judgment to which you are hastening? If under this personal responsibility, it surely devolves upon you to meet the issue at once, and meet it forever. Will your difficulties be surmounted by postponement? Are they not difficulties which inhere in the nature of the case? and must they not remain to be surmounted at last, if they are surmounted at all? What does any man gain by delay, except the hardening of his heart and the accumulation of sins which have to be deplored and confessed? And the appalling uncertainity of human life! At midnight, or at cock crowing, may be heard the cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." As soon as He enters within, the doors are shut; and you may knock at those shut doors through all eternity, only to hear the sepulchral answer, "I know you not:" "I called and ye refused; I stretched out my hand and ye did not regard; now also I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." Escape, escape this terrible mockery, which will be poured upon the lost soul forever.

XXVII.

SIN ALLEGED TO BE PUNISHED ONLY IN THIS LIFE.

GALATIANS vi, 7:—"*For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*"

There is a true sense, in which these words form the basis of a just doctrine of retribution; and there is a false sense, in which they lay the foundation of a corrupt theology in respect to sin. I purpose to present them both before you, in all the sharpness of contrast. Perhaps, logically, the exposition of the true doctrine should precede the exposure of the false. But there is often an advantage in reversing this order. By showing what a thing is not, we clear the ground all the better to show what it is: and sometimes the discussion of a subject upon its negative side, gives the site upon which to erect the structure of positive truth. I intend, this morning, simply to bring in review the *false* inference which many deduce from the language of the text, and from similar language wherever it is found in the Scriptures, to wit: that THE ONLY PUNISHMENT OF SIN IS IN THIS WORLD, IN THE EXPERIENCE OF THOSE SUFFERINGS WHICH INEVITABLY FLOW FROM THEM BY NECESSARY AND NATURAL LAW. Just as a man puts his unprotected hand into the flame and it is burnt, and it requires the intervention of a miracle to prevent the result; just as if a man should fall from the top of this spire, and lie a mangled corpse upon the stone pavement beneath; just as when a man contravenes the laws of health, and pays for his folly in a shattered constitution and in a premature death: just so, it is contended that there is a natural connection between sin and suffering, and that this is the only connection that exists; thereby restricting the punishment of sin to the sufferings which are experienced in the present world. Even where this is not formulated as a doctrine, it lurks as a fatal sentiment in many a sinner's heart: and those who are called to experience extraordinary trials, are apt to regard their present distress as a sufficient atonement for their sins against God. Their language, often of the lips, but still more often of the heart, is, "Have I not suffered enough? Can even a just God inflict upon me, for my transgression, more than I

do actually experience here upon the earth?" So that, in attacking this false theory, I feel that I am not altogether beating the air. If any of you are cherishing this sentiment in your hearts to-day, you have the deepest personal interest in pursuing with me the line of reflection upon which I shall enter.

The theory commends itself on account of its exceeding simplicity. It does not, you perceive, complicate itself with any intricate questions as to God's moral government. It is only this: Man sins, and man suffers; just as fire burns, and as water drowns—the connection between the two being purely natural and necessary: and this is the beginning, and the middle, and the end of the whole thing. It is moreover exceedingly acceptable to the carnal heart, because of the cheap price at which heaven is obtained at last. You see, the sinner does not make a solitary concession; he does not surrender a single sin; he carries with him, in unabated force, that sinful nature out of which all his transgressions proceed. He does not compromise, in the slightest degree, his pride or his independence before God. He simply weighs, in two scales, the pleasures of sin upon the one hand, and the pains of sin upon the other; and, because the connection between the two is inevitable, makes up his mind to endure the one for the sake of the other. Inasmuch as, the connection between sin and suffering is simply natural and necessary of course the punishment must be restricted to the sphere and condition in which the sin was itself committed. So that when a man passes out of the body, in which these sins have been committed, there is an entire end of the matter, and he is free from responsibility ever afterwards.

At the same time, my hearers, there is in this theory a most important admission: and I signalize it, at the very opening of my discourse, because I shall advert to it before I am done and press it to its logical conclusion. The admission is, that the creature cannot rise in insurrection against the Supreme Being without, by necessary law, experiencing the consequences. There is, even in this faint and corrupt view of sin, the expression of that innate sense of justice which God, in the constitution of our nature, has imbedded in the soul; and which all the sophistry we indulge, and all the violence we inflict upon ourselves, can neither eliminate nor destroy. It expresses that sense of right which belongs to man, as a being originally created in the image of God; and which, however that image be debased, yet to some extent reflects the justice of which it is the symbol and the shadow—that ineradicable sense of right in the human breast, without which man can never become a subject of law, either in this world or in the world to come. When the

sinner admits the absolute necessity of suffering as flowing from his sin, he has admitted the rigorous justice which makes it necessary that he shall experience these dismal consequences.

In the criticism which I have this morning to propose in regard to this theory, I hope, if I am fortunate enough to hold your attention to the close, to show that it fails to comprehend the facts in the problem which it undertakes to solve; and, at the conclusion, I hope to show you that it totally breaks down in the promise of salvation which it makes to the sinner.

1. *This theory does not provide for all classes of sins, nor does it explain all the forms of suffering.* That the connection between sin and suffering is a necessary connection, I fully admit; and I shall hope, in the sermon which succeeds this, most profusely to illustrate it. It is obvious from all the sins which a man commits against his own body, and from those which he commits against society You may take, as illustrations of the first, drunkenness and debauchery; and, as examples of the second, dishonesty and theft. He who surrenders himself to the vice of drunkenness, finds before long that, without losing any of its moral deformity, it has seated itself in the flesh and blood of his frame, as a physical disease. The inflamed appetite cries out with the insatiability of the horse-leech, "Give, give, give;" and though remorse, like an anaconda, wraps itself round the conscience of the man, and he experiences inexpressible torture in view of his own degradation, he finds that he is bound hand and foot, and led captive by his sin wherever it chooses to lead. So, too, a man who engages in dishonest practices, finds that he is at once an outlaw. His hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him. He is hounded on by society; and driven not only by the officers of the law, but by a persecuting public sentiment, like the Bedouin, to hide himself in the solitudes and wilds of the desert. The reason of this will appear upon a very little reflection. If God designs this life as one of discipline and probation, it must be protected—and it must be protected by restraints which are thrown immediately around it. Otherwise, in the prevalence of these sins, society itself becomes disintegrated, and the purpose of God will be frustrated. In regard, therefore, to sins which one commits against his own flesh and against the welfare of society, you find a principle obtaining which does not hold in reference to sins which are committed more immediately against God. These latter are reserved for severe inspection and stern retribution when we stand before the judgment bar. But in reference to the former, independent of those decisions which will

be rendered at the final judgment, God surrounds them with restraints which are immediate. The consequences immediately follow upon the transgression; and lift themselves up as a solemn warning to deter others from engaging in the same course.

Now the theory, that suffering flows from sin by merely natural law, and that this is the only punishment of it ever to be experienced, may answer, if you please, for this class of sins to which I have just made reference. But, my hearers, what becomes of those inward and spiritual sins, far more universal, and which these theorists in their calculation almost entirely discount? What is to be said of pride, or inordinate self-love, or self-righteousness, or hardness of heart, or neglect of God and of His worship, or unbelief, and of distrust of God in all the relations which, as Creator and Benefactor and Redeemer, He stands to His creatures upon the earth? Here are sins which are absolutely universal; and yet it is impossible to trace, in the present life, the punishment which they incur. If they are overtaken, in the just Providence of God, by the suffering which they deserve, it is perfectly impossible that you and I shall trace the connection between the two. The theory, therefore, does not provide for all classes of sins; but only for those sins which obtrude themselves upon the attention, and which, for the mere preservation of society, it is necessary that God should guard with special and immediate restraints.

On the other hand, this theory does not explain certain forms of suffering. There is distress of the body, of the mind, of the heart; distress corporeal and mental, which, so far as we can see, comes directly from the hand of God, without the intervention of any intermediate cause. The only reply which can be made to this is, that these unusual distresses, which men sometimes experience, are visited upon them as a punishment for those spiritual sins of which I presented a brief catalogue a moment or two since. To which I answer that we are utterly unable to trace any connection between those spiritual sins committed immediately against God, and these forms of earthly suffering; and it is necessary for the maintenance of the theory, not only that the suffering shall be observed, but that the connection with the sin shall be absolutely traced. It is not proved, but only assumed, that these sins and those sufferings are thus bound together. Now there is a most obvious distinction between suffering and punishment. Punishment is, in its very nature, retributive; and we are constrained to observe the connection between the suffering and the sin before we are competent to say that it comes upon us as punishment. There are other ends, as we are

able to show from the Scriptures, which God accomplishes in His holy and gracious Providence, by and through the sufferings of His children. If it be maintained that suffering is in this life strictly and alone penal; and if this be the only punishment which a man incurs in consequence of his sin; then it is necessary that between the suffering and the sin the connection shall not be assumed, but shall be distinctly pointed out.

2. *This theory utterly fails to account for the exemption of bad men from suffering; and, on the other hand, for the sufferings of the good.* If this life be strictly a life of retribution, and suffering flow from sin only by natural and necessary causation, then its discriminating feature ought to be the distinction which it marks between the righteous and the wicked: and we should antecedently expect that the wicked would be overwhelmed with distress exactly in proportion to their wickedness; and, on the other hand, that the good, if not entirely exempt from distress, will have it lightened in proportion to their goodness. Now, my hearers, what is your observation of the facts of the case? Why, the Book of Job gives it to you—a book written, I suppose, expressly to hold up before the eye the mystery in which God's Providence is enveloped, and the utter impossibility of sounding the reasons of the sufferings which are endured by the righteous. Or, if you wish the testimony in a more compact form, read the words of Asaph, as they are recorded in the seventy third Psalm: "My feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. * * Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches" And now the contrast: "I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." His natural reason was scandalized at the unequal apportionment of sorrow and of joy to the wicked and to the righteous, respectively, in this world. The wicked, who are declared to be the enemies of God, and who lie justly under His curse, spread their arms abroad and flourish like the green bay tree. The righteous, who are declared to be the children of God, the heirs of the largest promises, and who have the sweet assurance of love as they lie like children in their Father's bosom, and hold communion with Him through Jesus Christ, go with their heads bowed down like the bulrush,

and cry continually, "My leanness, my leanness." The pressure upon them is sometimes so constant and so severe, that they exclaim, in moments of darkness, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Is his mercy clean gone forever?" And then they cast themselves back upon memory, and call to mind His past goodness, and say, "This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."

Now, my brethren, upon the theory which I am endeavoring this morning to explode, as from beginning to end a false theory, I ask you to explain this fact—that the wicked prosper and increase in wealth; while, as a rule, the righteous are led to expect heavier and heavier chastisement from the hands of their Father, to the end of their lives, as the proof of their Son-ship. "Whom he loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." If this life be the only place of retribution, and if there be no other connection between sin and suffering but that of natural and necessary law, then I wish you to answer how it comes to pass that, in this retributive state, you have no sufficient distinction made between the righteous and the wicked; but, as it would rather seem, the relation is apparently reversed between the two.

3. *This theory gives you only a finite measure of sin;* inasmuch as the temporary distress experienced on earth is an adequate punishment. The measure of an offence—what is it? I throw it out interrogatively, that your mind may pause upon it before I furnish the answer. Ah, the assumption is, that the measure of an offence is the capacity of the transgressor to execute his purpose; and that when you have taken the dimensions of the culprit's strength, you have given the proportion of his sin: whereas, my hearers, according to the human, to say nothing of the divine, judgment, the measure of an offence is always *the magnitude of the interests which require to be protected.* Here is treason. Do you measure the enormity of that crime by the capacity of the man to accomplish his evil design? Is the crime of Guy Fawkes to be measured by his capacity, or incapacity, to blow up with gunpowder a few hundred persons in the parliament house? Is not the crime of treason against any just government to be measured by the majesty of the law, and the importance of preserving the interests of society as they are covered by the jurisdiction of law? It is a crime—I give you the English rather than the Latin of it—of injury to majesty; showing that, even by human judgment, the proportion of an offence is the magnitude of the interests which need to be protected under law; and not the simple capacity of the individual to execute what he attempts.

Now, by this principle, measure the enormity of sin. Every form of transgression, be it great or be it small, is an assault upon the divine supremacy—contains within itself the very essence of treason. It is a declaration on the part of the creature that he will be the master of the position; and that the great God shall not reign upon the throne of his affections. If he endure suffering as the consequence of sin, he at least has the satisfaction of knowing that he has held fast to his sin and to his sinful nature, and has not surrendered or compromised, even by the breadth of a hair, with the authority of the Being who sits on the throne above him. Sin, in all of its forms, whether aggravated or trivial, questions the perpetuity of God's government, and puts it under arrest, so far as the individual conscience and soul of that man are concerned. It is, therefore, a direct assault upon all the interests of the universe, as these require to be protected by the law of God. Will it answer to take a finite measure, and say that this gives you the proportions of sin? Answer me, my hearer: will the twinge of gout, endured for a week, atone for the impeachment of God's majesty, and the insurrectionary attempt to subvert His throne and break the sceptre in His grasp? Shall a spasm of remorse, endured for a night, be a full expression of all the meanness and corruption of sin as committed against a just and holy and pure and blessed God, whose claims over us, and over our obedience, are supreme? I need not enlarge the thought. Your own reason and conscience array themselves at once against the conclusion; and you are compelled to say that whilst sin may appear to you a finite evil, regarding it only through the capacity of the transgressor to execute what he attempts, yet, when you come to view that sin in the light of the interests against which it arrays itself, and which a sovereign and holy and almighty God must conserve, there must be an *infinite* as well as a *finite* measure to be applied to it. Therefore, the theory which gives to you only a finite measure, and contents itself with the inadequate sufferings of this earthly life, will not meet the exigencies of the case.

4. *This theory makes no compensation whatever to the justice of God, or to the majesty of His law.* The sinner suffers, and he suffers by the inevitable law which connects it with sin. The relation between the two is purely natural; and it is the very pith of this theory to deny that it can be moral. The sinner gives up nothing, exercises no contrition, manifests no repentance for any offence committed against the law of God, retains in undiminished vigor the sinful nature out of which the particular transgression springs. What atonement does the man make to the injured law and justice of God, even in the sufferings he endures?

Mark you, even in reference to the suffering, he does not voluntarily choose it, and by an act of his own will lay it upon the altar of God, as an expiatory sacrifice for his guilt. It has not even the poor virtue to recommend it of being self-inflicted, with the view to make a voluntary atonement for sin. He simply accepts the inevitable, the things bound together by a law of connection which cannot be broken. All that he does is to accept what he cannot avoid; and then to plead this before God, as all the satisfaction which can be given.

I do not know how it strikes you, but when I look into my own conscience, and read its judicial decisions rendered for the right and against the wrong, I rise to a conception of the justice that is in God, which there is no dialect to express. Now, my brethren, is it possible that this absolute and perfect justice shall be wholly compromised, and that no compensation shall be made to God and to His government? The law, too, of God! Ah, the law is unchangeably glorious, because it reflects the very perfections and attributes of the Deity. You have a most imperfect conception of it, when you regard it as being simply the expression of naked and arbitrary will. God's law is what it is, not simply because He wills it so, but because it is the expression of Himself. It is the exposition of His nature; and all His attributes are distinctly impressed upon the precepts, as they are together committed to the guardianship of the penalty. When a man breaks the law of God, he has arrayed against him not only the divine authority, but the divine nature. He has brought out against him not only the will of the Lawgiver, but each separate attribute. They all lie in repose in the bosom of the law, as the lightning sleeps in the cloud: and they leap forth to pursue the transgressor, just as the lightning flashes from one end of the horizon to the other. God's holiness, God's justice, God's truth, even God's mercy and God's love, all the attributes which enter into the divine character, come forth, as avengers of blood, to pursue the transgressor until he bows at the foot of the cross.

The fallacy of this entire theory is the quiet assumption, that God's government over man is simply *natural*, and not *moral;* that He does not, in the free determination of His own will, as the Supreme Ruler, bind sin with suffering so as *judicially* to punish it. It flows only by natural and necessary connection, and the bond between them cannot be broken.

5. In the last place, *this theory does not help the sinner out of the difficulty at all, but leaves Him to suffer through the boundless eternity upon which he enters.* I revert now to the principle which I claimed at

the outset to be admitted in this theory: viz, that God's relations with the creature are such, that he cannot oppose himself to His will without experiencing the pains and penalties which accrue. Grant, that the sufferings of this present life cancel all the guilt which is contracted here—what then? The connection between suffering and sin, according to this doctrine, is one which cannot in the nature of things be disturbed—a connection, because natural, *necessary*. The sinner, then, goes into eternity with a clear record, if you please, because all the sins committed here have been cancelled by the sufferings which he endured here. But what if he carries into that eternity his entire character; and, more than that, a character which is compacted in sin? The very first act which that soul will commit in eternity, will be an act of sin By the force of the unsubdued and unsanctified nature which still abides, the first effort will be to rebel against God; and, by the same law of eternal and necessary connection, that first sin will be followed by its own suffering. Throughout eternity he will go on to sin; and so throughout eternity he will go on to suffer. According to this dismal doctrine, there is no hope forever to any soul that has once broken the law of God. The whole human race go down into darkness with the fallen angels, and are there reserved in chains, suffering from these new judgments which their sins are evermore drawing down upon their heads. Do you call that a gospel? Tell me, my hearer, if I must hang my hope of salvation upon a scheme like this? Will you shut me up under a hard, cast iron law, from which even the omnipotence and grace of God cannot extricate me? Why, the despair of hell begins on earth, the moment you take in the consequences of the theory which I am seeking this morning to explode.

The only answer to this conclusion seems to be that the sufferings endured in this life are *reformatory;* so that being benefited by what we suffer, we become better, and cease from sinning in the world to come. But discipline belongs to another system; and the theorist has quietly borrowed from the scheme of grace a principle which does not square with his doctrine at all. According to it, we are here under the operation of naked law; and that law not moral, but natural. Now, to say that suffering will reform one's character—that he will come forth from the discipline like an asbestos garment that is burnt clean in the fire, and that he will go into eternity with a heart no more disposed to sin—is quietly to borrow from the very Gospel which it is seeking to supplant, its fundamental feature, and to graft it upon a dispensation of law. It is *grace* alone which makes suffering disciplinary. It is when God speaks from His throne as our Father reconciled through Jesus

Christ, that He says, "Whom I love, I chasten, and scourge every son whom I receive." We cannot allow this advocate of naked, hard, external law, to evade the consequences of his own system by artfully filching from the Gospel a principle which is in direct antagonism to it.

More than this, does it comport with your observation of the facts of human life, that suffering of itself makes men better? On the contrary, is not the effect of mere suffering, unless sanctified by grace, to embitter the heart against God, and to make it rise in more intense insurrection against His authority? Look out upon society, and where are the men that improve in personal character from the sufferings which they undergo? A man will wail like a whipped child upon his bed of sickness, and cry out in the agony of his pain to the God who alone can relieve, and make profuse promises of amendment—and rise from the bed and go back, like the sow that is washed, to his wallowing in the mire. The more God hedges up a man, if it be only within external and artificial restraints, the more does he become embittered against these restraints, and the more is he compacted in his sin. If pain could purge from sin, hell, with its terrible sufferings, ought to empty itself of its inhabitants, and send them rejoicing on their way to the world of light and blessedness above. Yet the lost spirits continue to breathe forth maledictions against God, and to curse the law under which they are slain.

Now I ask, of what use is a theory which, when closely examined, does not comprehend the facts of the problem which it undertakes to solve? which leaves out whole classes of sins, as well as forms of suffering, from the review which it takes of human life? and which, upon a limited as well as a partial induction, founds the conclusion that by this earthly suffering a man will escape the consequences of his sin, and at last sit down with the redeemed in glory? Of what use, my hearer, is the theory, when at the last it breaks down in the very hope which it breathes in your ear; and leaves you at death, and at the judgment bar, and throughout eternity, still the sinner that you were upon the earth? still, by the necessity of nature, breaking God's law: and still, by the eternal connection between sin and suffering, bringing upon you, in the pains and penalties of hell, the just consequences of transgression there: You are creatures of reason; and the interests which are at stake, in the solution of this problem, are immense. It is the undying life of the soul which you must preserve; and a fatal mistake committed now is irretrievable forever. Is it becoming to a being of intellect, to close

both eyes, and, through a partial induction of a few facts, pacify conscience with the hope of salvation, which, like the mirage of the desert, disappears as soon as you approach it? Your immortal interests are to be secured or forever forfeited, between this and the hour of your death. The interval, which God still allows, of probation, may be an interval of years; it may be, to some sitting in this house, an interval only of hours. God only knows whether it will be more than an interval of moments But be it longer or shorter—God, by His wonderful power, has compressed all eternity within the embrace of time. With a mighty condensing force, He has shut up the expanding fortunes of eternal ages within the probation of five, ten or twenty years upon the earth. I ask you to consider. I hold you before the bar of your own reason, and implore you to examine the hope upon which you are relying as you drift through life; and with which you must drift until you are brought by a sudden shock against the bar of judgment.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is worth a thousand such theories as this. It gives you a full, free, perfect pardon—a pardon which is grounded upon entire satisfaction to God's holy and irrepealable law. It gives you not only pardon, but a new heart. It brings you not only a suffering Redeemer, but, through the intercessions of an ever-living Priest, the blessed power of the Holy Spirit, quickening those who are dead in trespasses and sins, and making them new creatures in Christ Jesus. This theory, even at the utmost, does not provide any change in your nature. But the Gospel of Jesus Christ makes you, out and out, a new man. You become a new creature; you are actually born, by the power of the Holy Ghost, into the kingdom of light and of glory. The glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which comes to the sinner in his extremity, and gives him the *holiness* as well as the *pardon* that he needs —why will you reject it? Why will you suffer it to go by default? Why not cast away all other refuges, and, before the rains fall and the floods beat, be safely housed within the ark, upon which you will ride safely upon the flood forever and forever? It is offered to you, without money and without price: and all the tenderness of an infinite Father pleads with you, through the teachings of this Book and by these poor tones of a creature's voice, to accept the finished salvation, and become the children of God without rebuke through Jesus Christ.

XXVIII.

FIXED CONNECTION BETWEEN SIN AND PUNISHMENT.

GALATIANS vi, 7:—"*For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*"

On last Sabbath I attempted to vindicate this passage of Scripture from the false construction put upon it by some: that if we reap exactly what we sow, then the only punishment of sin is that which flows from the natural relation between the two; and, consequently, that both expire at death. That is to say, when the transgressor leaves the world in which the sin was committed, the connection with punishment is broken forever; and hence we must find, in the transient sufferings of this present life, the only vindication of the divine holiness which is possible in the case.

I proceed now to show the sense in which these words are true, and in which they lay the basis of a sound doctrine of retribution beyond the grave. I attempt this the more willingly, because the polemic presentation of truth is, almost of necessity, one-sided and partial. Most errors contain within themselves some portion of truth, and derive from this all their plausibility and their chief power to harm: and there is perhaps danger, in the exposure of error, that we shall somewhat wound the truth which it implicitly contains, and of which it is simply a perversion.

The text, then, affirms THE FIXED CONNECTION BETWEEN SIN AND PUNISHMENT: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This connection is partly *natural*, by the law of necessary sequence; and it is partly *positive* and *moral*, arising from the displeasure of the Supreme Ruler, which is *judicially pronounced*. I desire this morning to present the truth, not only as it is embodied in the error which was attacked on last Sabbath, but also the truth which it most expressly denies.

1. *Sin, by estranging the soul from God, cuts it off from spiritual life;* and, under that aspect, the declaration of the text holds true. All created life, as I have often affirmed from this place, is derived and con-

tingent. It is the prerogative only of God, to be self-existent and uncaused. Incomprehensible as the fact may be, as soon as we undertake to stretch our thought over the statement, yet are we obliged to assume it in our science and in our philosophy, no less than in our religion, as the fundamental postulate from which everything else must hang. And we are fortunately so constituted intellectually, that the instant this incomprehensible fact is stated to the mind, it sticks. By an established congeniality between the truth objectively presented, and the very nature of the human understanding, the mind is compelled, by the absolute law which regulates it, to absorb the truth, although it is perfectly incapable of comprehending it. As to all beings below God, their existence is communicated. By the force of the term which we employ when we speak of the creature, he must derive his being from a source higher than himself. The proposition holds true alike of all classes of created being. It is true of the tallest of the cherubim and of the seraphim before the throne, as it is true of the smallest insect that floats in the sunbeam, whose existence can only be descried through the power of the microscope. Not only is all created existence, in the first instance, derived from God; but in every being, great or small, that existence is maintained by the constant exercise of divine and providential care. It is true not only of the physical life of the body, but of the intellectual and moral life which we ascribe to the spirit. In every aspect in which you view the creature, he lives—corporeally, intellectually and morally—in God, and "moves and has his being in him."

Now, brethren, sin is the exact contradiction of all that is in God, the direct antithesis of His whole nature. Therefore, its immediate and necessary effect is to cut off the creature from all communion with God; and upon this ensues an entire loss of spiritual life. See how exact the representation is in the Catechism, which our children learn, in the definition of man's sinful estate. This is said to consist "in the guilt of Adam's first sin;" there is the first element—in "the want of original righteousness;" there is the second element—in "the corruption of his whole nature;" which is the third element—out of which all his "actual transgressions" do proceed. This loss of "original righteousness," which is named as the second term, if you will examine it logically, is the nexus which connects the first and the third parts of the definition together. Adam being constituted, in the Covenant of Works, the head and representative of his entire posterity, the very instant he sinned and brought himself under condemnation, by virtue of his representative relation, he brought under the same condemnation the whole human

race. Every man born by natural descent of Adam, is therefore born into the world under this condemnation of God's law. There is reckoned to him the guilt of Adam's sin, whereby he stands under the law a condemned criminal. Now, instantly upon that condemnation, as the judicial result from it, is the loss of that righteousness in which man was originally created. As the life flows only from God to the creature, and is maintained in him by a constant communion with God, the moment he sins and comes under the condemnation of the law, by the antithesis subsisting between this sin and the nature of God, he is cut off from all communion with Him. That is to say, he is cut off from the very source of spiritual life. There is the entire loss of the original righteousness in which he was created; and then, as supervening upon this, is the entire corruption of the man's nature—out of which, as from a full fountain, flow all his actual transgressions.

When we speak of the soul as losing its life, of course it is not meant that the soul ceases to exist. The natural life of the soul abides; it still lives, as soul: but being now cut off from communion with God, it has lost its holiness, which is its *spiritual* life, and it becomes dead in trespasses and in sins. Thus you perceive the foundation is laid for the three great doctrines of grace. First, that the sinner must receive an absolute pardon, which obliterates the condemnation under which he lies and restores him to the favor of God. Secondly, that, through this restoration of the divine favor, he shall be quickened into spiritual life by the power of the Holy Ghost. Then, thirdly, that the new life which has been imparted in the new birth, shall be maintained, not only throughout this life, but throughout eternity, by the most intimate personal communion with that God of holiness from whom our spiritual life proceeds. The pardon is absolute in its character, because it has been purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ through His death and sufferings as a sacrifice for sin. The new life imparted to us is perfect in its character, because communicated by the Holy Ghost, who is Himself the Quickener. And the fellowship which we maintain with God, is fully maintained in that world of blessedness to which we are introduced after death.

Now, my hearers, this which I have just stated is the necessary connection between sin and punishment. That is to say, we are able to trace the effect, step by step, back to the cause from which it flows. Sin, being divisive in its character, cuts the soul off from communion with God; and there ensues from loss of that communion, the loss of spiritual life. But whilst the connection is thus *natural*, coming by the

law of necessary sequence, it is, at the same time, *judicially pronounced.* God, in the free exercise of His will, makes this connection, which is first natural, also moral—in order the more completely to illustrate His own holiness. The first awful punishment of sin is the blight which falls upon man's entire nature, by which he is unfitted for the service and enjoyment of God, either in this world or in the world to come.

2. *By the constitution of our nature, acts go back into character, and fructify it both for good and for evil.* You perceive that this also is a natural law. Our acts can never be viewed independent of, and apart from, the character out of which they spring; and, as the connection is determined between the two, that which proceeds from us comes back into us, and strengthens the original principle. Why, the rose which blooms in your garden expresses the precise virtue of the plant, and shows to you the properties which God in the beginning impressed upon it. Because it is a rose, it can produce nothing else but the bloom of the rose. The orange that grows upon your tree, determines for you the nature of the tree itself. Men "do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles." Every plant produces its own fruit after its own kind, and according to its own nature. You slide along the analogy, until you find the law reproduced in the moral world; so that the character which belongs to the creature, brings forth the fruit which belongs to it. Out of a good heart proceed good thoughts and desires; and out of an evil heart, evil thoughts and evil desires. We must make the tree good if we desire the fruit to be good; and the law holds as to man, as it does to the plant. Our actions are the fruit of character, and bear the same relation to it that the rose does to the plant, or the orange does to the tree. These actions which we put forth are the products of what is within us. They represent our thoughts; they represent our emotions; they represent all the choices and determinations of the will; they express all the attributes and characteristics which belong to our nature.

Now, my hearers, if this be true, you perceive that a man's actions do not, as many superficially think, lie with a superincumbent pressure upon him, just as the dead leaves fall from the tree upon the ground around its root: but is, rather, like the decaying vegetation, which returns to the soil a part of the nutriment which, in the first instance, it extracted from it. So do these actions come back into the nature of the man, and strengthen his character, whether it be for good or whether it be for evil. You see the illustration of it in the power of habit, forming that second nature over the first, which we find it so difficult to subdue. Here, then, is a natural connection between sin and punishment—that by a law of

our being, the sin committed returns upon its circuit to the source whence it issued, only to flow out again in new transgressions with endless and increasing power of reproduction. Observe the double significance of this. There is not only the responsibility for a single sin, and the punishment which is attached to it; but the superadded penalty that, by the fixed determination of God's will, the power of sinning is by so much increased, and that, too, in a fearful rate of progression.

Ah, it is this which makes the scheme which I denounced on last Sabbath utterly unprofitable; and it is this which makes the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ of such priceless value to the sinner. God give me the strength of thought to throw due emphasis into the utterance—that there is no gospel, that there is no salvation, which does not provide for the transformation of man's character! Pardon is not all that the sinner needs. Even were the terrible record of actual sins obliterated, if the fountain of depravity remains unhealed, the bitter waters will continue to flow: and it is a fearful fact that in every act which we perform, in every thought we indulge, in every word we utter, we are passing through an unconscious and certain education for eternity. If we pass beyond the grave perfectly crystalized in character, God help us if we be still sinners! for, in that case, we have a nature which is compacted in sin, and which never shall through all eternity do anything else but sin. The fate of that man is forever sealed, who goes across the border with a character unchanged; for, by the necessary holiness of the Creator, there can be no decree but "Depart from me, I never knew you." Thus you have again a natural connection between sin and its punishment, rendered positive and moral by being judicially ordained of God. The natural and the moral, the necessary and the positive, are united here, as we saw them united under the preceding head.

3. *The instincts and the principles of the wicked will find in eternity nothing congenial upon which to terminate.* Eternity must be to them the blackness of darkness. I said in the outset that spiritual death does not mean that the soul ceases to exist. That would be annihilation—the entire destruction of the class and order to which we belong. Although human nature recoils from that, this would be a punishment vastly more terrible. It would be to live forever, only to die; to live in the constant act of dying; to die whilst living, and to live whilst dying; it would be a living death. You recoil from the anticipation of nature's last hour. You dread the agonies of dissolution. Perhaps they are exaggerated. But, my hearers, they present to you a picture of the lost soul in eternity. A soul that lives by the force of its spirit nature,

and lives eternally in the very spasm and agony of death itself; lives—and feels, whilst it lives, that it is dying under the curse which banishes it from God's presence and from the glory of His power. Because the soul preserves its natural existence in eternity, all the powers which constitute it live too. The man has intelligence in hell, and reason and judgment. The man has conscience in hell, the very organ of God's law. He is continually interpreting the commandment, and applying it in the obligation to obey. Man carries into the eternal world his affections and his will. He is a man still, whether he be in heaven above or in hell beneath; goes into eternity with the full complement of all his intellectual and moral faculties. But the dismal fate of the lost is, that they find nothing in the world of woe upon which those faculties can terminate and find enjoyment. Man will think, and yet never find comfort in a solitary thought; will love and hate, and yet find only torture in those emotions of the heart. The understanding is filled with darkness, and the judgment with prejudices; and the fancy is rancid, so that it produces only images of lust. The affections, estranged from God, fasten only upon that which is evil; and the will, under bondage to sin, always chooses that which is hateful.

In this present life, because it is a life of probation, what I have just represented as true of eternity only partially takes place. We are able, in this world, to disconnect in a great degree things from God. There is such a thing as natural truth, as we see in the investigations of science and in the speculations of philosophy. If we had retained our original holiness, I suppose we should have been scientific still. We should have gone out with these inquisitive eyes and searched over all nature, to behold the wonderful proof of the divine power and glory. To man in his original state all the paths of science and of philosophic speculation would have been so many highways, by which the mind would have travelled upward and onward to hold intercourse with God; and wherever in nature we touched the fringe of Jehovah's garment, our arms would have been thrown open in the embrace of Himself. But in our fallen state, in these investigations we amuse the mind with natural truth as it is disconnected from God, who is the measure of that truth. I would not be so unjust as to say that there is not a superb joy even in the natural prosecution of truth. I confess that, next to an approving conscience and to the communion which a pious man holds with his Father above, there is no joy purer and sweeter than the intellectual delight which one has in the contemplation of abstract and natural truth. Therefore a sinner, even in this world, may find much upon which to

expend the energies of his intellect, and from which to derive the richest pleasure.

But the grand characteristic of the eternal world is, that all truth centres in theology. God who, in His works of creation, displays on every hand the traces of His power, does, to a large degree, even behind these very works, hide His own person. All nature is a parable, like those wonderful parables which dropped from the lips of the Master when He was upon the earth, half concealing what it reveals All nature, while it reveals God, is a veil thrown around His person, so that we shall never in this world, with the eyes of sense, gaze upon His immaculate glory. It is only by the power of a mighty inference, that we are able to leap from these productions of His power to the conception of His being and of His glory. But in the eternal world God will make the disclosure of His personality. He will come out of the pavilion in which He now hides Himself. He will come forth from behind the screen of nature, which seems to be thrown between Him and His creatures. It will be God Himself who will be the subject of all the revelations which are to be made; and through you may probe the mysteries which science in this life barely begins to uncover, it will be to see God "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders," the immediate object of our contemplation and of our search.

The sinner in hell, with every thought, will be obliged to see God; with every exercise of his own powers, will be obliged to feel His presence; and yet, in the recoil of his own sinfulness, he must perfectly abhor the very Being upon whom he is obliged to gaze. Oh, what a dismal eternity for the sinner! To carry an intellect that must think, and must think of God only to recoil from Him! That must feel anguish penetrating every department of his nature, because his sin cuts him off from the Being whom he is obliged to view! Forever and forever, deepening in its gloom as the ages roll over him, must the sinner find eternity only a prison; always receding from that which he is obliged to see, and always hating that of which he is obliged to think. It is an awful prison, when that prison is a man's own nature. Thicker than bars of iron or walls of stone, more gloomy and desolate than the cell of the penitentiary, is the prison-house when a man is shut up within himself; impelled by a fatal necessity to go out from himself, only to be driven back upon himself; eternally feeling forth for the things that are beyond, only by a mighty repression to be locked up within his own thought, through an absolute abhorrence of that which he contemplates. Hell! My hearers, the word is full of terror; and the more terrible as

you enter into the spiritual elements of the anguish which the lost are made there to endure. Here, again, you have the natural connection between the sin and the punishment; and yet a connection which is not simply natural, but judicially ordained of God as the expression of His infinite holiness and justice.

4. *Apart from all this, there will be to the lost in eternity the immediate experience of God's wrath.* I have no desire to expand this, nor indeed can I. In this world none of us can form a conception of what is meant by the wrath of God. Nor if I could expound it, would I dare the effort. Let the mystery which God Himself has thrown around the word, veil the terror from your sight. But just hear the testimony of Scripture as to the fact itself: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in righteousness." [Romans i, 18.] "But unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. * * For there is no respect of persons with God." [Romans ii, 8, 9, 11] I can only say, in the exposition of this wrath, that it is *the sense of God's judicial displeasure made to rest immediately upon the soul;* working, it may be, by natural law through all the faculties and powers with which man is endowed—but at the same time distinctly perceived, through those moral apprehensions which we will hereafter be compelled to have, that this suffering is not simply by natural sequence, but an expression of God's moral displeasure. We shall feel, in the experience of all that is most dismal, that we are formally pronounced outlaws from His kingdom, banished from His presence and from the glory of His power forever.

We would hold the breath in terror, if it could be fully apprehended. But just think of yourself, the creature, living, moving, having your being in God, depending upon His immediate power for every thought you exercise and every emotion you feel—and then think that, by and by, you may be in a state where all this helplessness and dependence and sense of creatureship will come to the surface as a matter of painful and distressing experience! That while you pant for Him in whom you live, and yearn, in the aspirations of your social nature, for fellowship with Him in His glory, you will find all this forever repressed—God shutting you out, barring you away from His presence, and saying to you, in the midst of these feelings and aspirations, "Depart from me, for I never knew you!" Oh, my hearers, to be banished from heaven

forever! and, in that dismal exile, always to be sinking in the consciousness of our own weaknesss and helplessness, while God puts forth His power and His voice only to say to us, "Away, away, away!" To hear the word echoing through all the arches of eternity, sinking you lower in the pit and widening the distance between you and God—away from God, away in your helplessness, away in your ruin, with no prospect of ever retracing those steps, and being again folded within the bosom of the eternal Father! This it is to be damned!

5. *There will be in eternity an exact gradation of the punishment to the sin.* You perceive, from what I have already said, that punishment is kindred in nature with the sin. By just so much as it flows by necessary sequence, of course they must be akin. The nature of the sin determines the nature of the suffering, just so far as the relation between the two is a necessary relation. Even in the chastisement which God inflicts upon His own children, oftentimes the suffering we endure is of the nature of the offence. Why, look at David in those sufferings which embittered his old age, and threw such a gloom over his later Psalms, how exactly the punishment was akin with the great crime which put the deepest blot upon his character! So you and I, as we trace God's dealings with us, though we be his children, can often see the visible connection between the sufferings we endure and the sins for which God chastens us. Still more is this fact proclaimed at the judgment bar. Throughout eternity we shall find the punishment of the guilty always proportioned to their sin. This makes the eternal world retributive. Heaven is a place of glorious reward, because, though its prizes are altogether of grace, yet that grace measures them out to us according to our work. And hell is a place of retribution, where the suffering is exactly proportioned to the measure of the guilt, for He will reward every man just according to his deeds. There will be unquestionably, in the eternal world, both above and below, that exact discrimination between every man which shall vindicate to each the immaculate holiness and severe justice of God. The sinner will feel not only that he is condemned under law, and that the punishment is of the nature of the sin, but that it is proportioned to its magnitude; and as he goes forward in his sin, he will find the punishment accumulating upon his head forever and forever.

I see no outlet. A man carries with him his depraved character, which continues to find expression in transgression and rebellion; and by these new sins, he draws upon his head new judgments. The only escape is that which the cross of Jesus Christ provides; and this cross

is planted directly in your path. My hearers, if any of you should at last go down into everlasting burnings, you must, in order to reach that doom, pass around the cross of the Redeemer. If you reject the testimony and the warning which is ringing upon your ear, you do despite to the spirit of grace, and reject the Lamb of God, who is offered to you as a perfect and blessed Redeemer. Right by the cross you must press to perdition. When you have finally passed beyond it, you have passed the only outlet which the combined power and mercy and grace of God have ever contrived for the escape of the sinner from his ruin.

And now, my hearers, the solemn thought comes at the close, that each one of us is sowing—and what we sow we shall reap. By that fixed connection which God has established between the two, partly natural and partly positive, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap. I ask each one of you singly, What is the seed which you are sowing in the ground? You can determine the complexion of the future by looking at the present. Bear in mind that whether you are, or are not, aware of it, each one of you is passing through a real education for eternity; and there is a training for hell, as there is a training for heaven. There are men in this world who are painfully and laboriously educating themselves only to be damned; turning the truth of God into a lie; improving all their opportunities with the utmost diligence; prosecuting every advantage in order that they may be athletic sinners, that God at the last may see them in the full proportion of their sin—only to be banished by His decree where the worm dieth not and the fire is never quenched. I know that you do not think of it. Many of you who are absorbed in the business of the world, in the cares of life, or, it may be, entangled in its frivolous pleasures, do not estimate it. It only proves how superficial the thinking of most men is, on the subject of religion. But every thought, my hearer, is a seed; every act is a seed; every word is a seed; every desire you indulge, is a seed. You are sowing, and you shall reap exactly what you sow. Oh, accept the proposition, which is as true of the Christian as it is true of the sinner. Sow the good seed—the seed of repentance, of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, of an humble but earnest striving against the power of sin; and have those graces developed within you here on earth, which shall fit you for the presence and for the enjoyment of God forever in heaven.

XXIX.

CERTAINTY OF THE PROMISES IN CHRIST.

II CORINTHIANS 1, 20:—"*For all the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*"

The Apostle, you remember, after his unsuccessful presentation of the Gospel to the philosophers at Athens, proceeded immediately to Corinth, one of the largest commercial centres of the ancient world. Here, under the blessing of God, he succeeded in gathering an important church during a ministry of one year and a half; and to this church, two of his longest epistles are addressed. It is a notable and most instructive circumstance, that the church which, in the apostolic age, was the most richly endowed with gifts, was the most deformed by vices. Being largely made up of converts from heathenism, it became very early and very sadly tainted with the vices of the corrupt and licentious city in which it was founded; drawing forth the sharp censures which you find in both of these epistles. Not only were there parties in the bosom of that church—one claiming to be of Paul, and another of Cephas, and another of Christ, as though Christ were divided—but they even perverted the holy sacrament of the Supper, turning it into a feast for eating and drinking, and bringing the reproach of sacrilege upon the Christian name. There was, too, a faction which set itself vigorously to oppose the Apostle's authority and to undermine his influence; and from their severe charges he, in this chapter, particularly undertakes to vindicate himself. It had been his purpose to visit Corinth on his way from Ephesus into Macedonia; and then, upon his return from Macedonia into Judea with the gifts for the brethren, to stop again at Corinth to bestow upon them what he calls "a second benefit." Circumstances, however, which are but partially known to us, induced him to change these plans, which was immediately seized as an occasion for traducing his character. He is accused not only of vacillation, but of duplicity and of fraud; that whilst claiming to be under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit, his movements were actually directed by

carnal policy. Against these charges, so damaging to his integrity as a man and to his authority as an apostle, Paul, in this chapter, enters his defence; amongst other things taking God solemnly to witness, that to *spare them* he had postponed his visit—that time might be allowed for the cure of the evils which he points out, so that his visit, whenever it should be paid, might not be one of ungracious severity. "I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand."

But it is interesting to observe how swiftly the Apostle passes off from this personal defence to a vindication of his doctrines. "But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us." As though he had said, "Whatever vacillation you may discover in my conduct, there is not the least uncertainty as to my preaching. The theme of all discourse, by myself and by my colleagues, was Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and forever, in whom is never to be found any contradiction. In Him there is not yea and nay, but the yea forevermore; 'for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us.'" That is to say, how many soever the promises of God may be, the certainty of their fulfilment is to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. To this topic, so full of comfort and of strength to God's dear children, I solicit your attention this morning—THE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY OF THE FULFILMENT OF EVERY PROMISE TO THE CHRISTIAN, IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

1. *These promises, from the very beginning, concentrate upon the Lord Jesus Christ, as the object upon whom they terminate:* so that the simple appearance of Jesus Christ in this world of sin, becomes the perfect pledge to the church, through all ages, that every promise must be fulfilled. If you go back to the garden of Eden, the very first promise that broke upon the despair of the human race was the promise of the woman's seed: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." All the covenants which God made with the ancient patriarchs, like the bow of promise which spans the heavens, rest upon the person of the coming Messiah. The entire history of the Hebrews—from the calling of Abraham, in whose loins they potentially were, until the destruction of their nationality by Titus and the armies of the Romans—pointed exclusively to Him who should sit upon the throne of David,

whose kingdom should be an everlasting kingdom, and of whose dominion there should be no end. All the special promises in the Old Testament, made to individual saints, had reference exclusively to that Jesus who, in the fulness of time, should appear and accomplish their salvation. The entire ritual of the old economy—whether you look at the priest or at the altar or at the temple, with the various sacrifices and typical ablutions—all were prophetic intimations of the method of grace by which this Jesus should accomplish the salvation of a lost world.

It is a sad mistake when you so separate between the Old Testament and the New as to think you shall find the Gospel only in the latter. And it is a sad perversion of those ancient records if, from the beginning to the close, you do not find the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, just as, in its fulfilment, it is pointed out to you in the Evangelists and in the epistles of the New Testament.—A Gospel presented, if you please, in emblems and through shadows; a Gospel which, in its essential character, is foreshadowing and typical; but still a Gospel, in all its history, in all its promises, in all its modes of worship, evermore holding up Him who should come under the appointment of His Father. And so, until the last generation of Adam shall be born upon the earth, we shall look back to that historic moment when Jesus, the Son of God, made His appearance in the world. As the types and symbols of the Old Testament pointed forward to Him that should come, so the sacraments and symbols of the New Testament Church, as the memorials of that coming, point historically back to His appearance upon the earth.

This, then, is the first consideration which I present to your view: every promise which, in the Old Testament, God made to our race as to salvation, had respect to Jesus Christ. All those promises and all those prophecies which, in their quick succession, form a belt of light across the darkness of the Old Dispensation, rest upon the person of our blessed Lord. When, therefore, He stands in His human form upon the earth, and undertakes the great offices with which he is charged, His simple presence is the pledge of the Father that all the promises which concentred in Him shall unquestionably be redeemed. His advent to the earth was in consequence of those promises. His appearance among men was a fulfilment in part of the same. And of their application to the experience of the saints throughout all time, the personal presence of the personal Redeemer is the absolute pledge.

2. *All the promises of grace are made to Christ, as the Trustee and Representative of His people.* It is, therefore, His official charge to administer the same. It is very common to say that the promises of God

are made to sinners—language a little inaccurate, although, perhaps, not unsafe with the qualification which usually accompanies it. They are made to sinners in the sense that they are made on their behalf, and accrue to their advantage; but it is inaccurate to say that these promises ever were, in the first instance, made directly to sinners, considered as such.

I apprehend, my hearers, that very few of us appreciate sufficiently the difficulties which lie at the initiation of a scheme of grace. When God created man in His own image, and brought him, by the force of his intellectual and moral nature, under the jurisdiction of law, this law became the original medium through which all the divine intercourse with the creature must be held. The law was to him the exposition of the divine character, and the full statement of the divine claims. It defined to man his own nature, and marked out the sphere of his operations. Through it, therefore, all communication must pass from one to the other—whether of favor and blessing on the part of God, or of obedience and worship on the part of man.

Now, upon transgression, the relation which God sustains as Lawgiver interposes a bar against the intervention of mercy. So that it becomes the largest problem, I will not say merely to human but even to angelic thought, how a God of law, administering His government over beings who have sinned, shall speak to them words of compassion and of love. How shall he say aught to them except "Ye shall surely die?" The law in itself can contain no provision for the salvation of a sinner. To postulate in the law a plan of mercy by which the transgressor shall escape the penalty, is to subvert its very foundation. It can have no language to those who are under its control but this: "Obey and live; disobey and die."

How, then, shall God reveal Himself to us as "a just God and a Savior?" Ah, you must go back into the awful mystery of His being to find the solution of this problem. Because He is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it is possible that one of these shall represent the Godhead and vindicate the majesty of the divine law; whilst another shall undertake for the sinner, and become his representative, and work out the mercy and the grace and the love which are as supreme, in the nature of God, as either His justice, His holiness or His power. Now, immediately upon transgression, God reveals that purpose of mercy which had been formed in the councils of eternity. The Father enters into a covenant with the Son, makes Him the Representative and Head of the seed whom He gave to Him in the covenant of redemption; and, in that

representative relation, commits to Him all the promises in which the salvation of the sinner is implicitly contained.

My brethren, there is not one promise, from the beginning of Genesis to the close of Revelation, which a holy God could speak directly to you or to me, as we lie under the condemnation of the law we have broken. There can be no contradiction in the utterances of God. If under a dispensation of law He has proclaimed "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," then, as the Lawgiver, He cannot say to us, at the same moment, "Ye shall live." He appoints His own Son, therefore, to be the believer's Representative and Surety. That Son appears upon the earth, "made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law;" assumes in reference to these the precise relation to the covenant of works which the first Adam sustained; renders the obedience in which the first Adam failed; fulfils, as the first Adam should have done, all the terms of that first covenant; and works out a perfect righteousness, by and through which they may stand accepted before the Father.

The particular point, however, to which I solicit your attention, is that the promises in the Bible are not immediately to sinners lying under the curse, but in the eternal covenant were made to Christ, as He undertakes for the sinner, obeys and dies for the sinner. He, in this relation of Trustee, holds them in *His* hand, and is charged by the Father with the responsibility of administering them to all the redeemed. How is it possible, then, that these promises can fail of their fulfilment, when they are given over to a trustee like the Lord Jesus Christ?

3. *The Lord Jesus, to whom these promises are given in trust, has also fulfilled the conditions on which they were suspended.* And here I think you have a solution of the question which is sometimes raised in theological circles: whether the promises which we read in the Bible are, in their nature, *absolute* or *conditional*. Well, brethren, they are both; but, of course, with reference to two entirely distinct parties. All these promises are given to the Lord Jesus Christ, upon the condition that He shall fulfil the stipulations of the covenant of grace. He must be willing to become the representative of the sinner. He must be willing to leave the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and, as incarnate, to be found upon the earth. He must be willing, being "found in fashion as a man," to become "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He must go down into the grave in order to carry the curse and bury it there. He must rise from that grave in order to secure the life which His people have forfeited. He must

ascend into His Father's presence and glory, before His throne, to sue out the pardon which He has purchased with His blood. He must qualify every soul whom He has redeemed, so that it shall be fitted to enter into His presence and to sit down at His right hand. These are the stipulations of the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son, and upon their fulfilment all these promises are suspended. You see, therefore, that so far as the promises are made to Jesus Christ, they are conditional—conditioned upon His fulfilment of the terms of the contract between the two.

But when the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Administrator of these promises, makes them over from Himself to us, then they are absolute, unclogged with qualifications or restrictions of any sort. They come to us as the full expression of that love which burns in His bosom and in the bosom of the Father. It may occur to some of you to ask, just at this point, whether faith be not a condition, on our part, in order to the realization of these promises of grace? for it is often represented, even from the pulpit, under that term. The expression is to a certain extent inaccurate, and yet not unsafe; because, whenever faith is represented as a condition upon which we receive the promises, we are careful to separate from it all supposition of merit—as though man, in the exercise of this faith, had brought God under any obligation to bestow upon him the blessings of heaven. I prefer rather to represent faith as a prerequisite than as a condition—to indicate it as a characteristic mark which defines and discriminates the parties to whom the promises are *absolutely* made. And now, upon this statement, go into a careful examination of the Scriptures, and you will find that every promise in the Bible is made to the believer—made to parties who are in Christ, made to those who by faith have been brought into vital union with Jesus Christ, and made to no others. "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." "To them that believe Christ is precious;" "To Abraham and to his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ."

This I take to be the true view of the case. God holds in His hands infinite blessings to bestow upon the sinner; and all these are wrapped in gracious and loving promises. Now, in order to approximate the blessings and the promises to the sinner as he lies under condemnation, the Father appoints a Trustee, sends His own Son from His own bosom to occupy that intervening relation, and to this Trustee all these promises are made over. If you and I, or any sinner upon the face of the earth

is to have a vested right in these promises, and in the salvation which they bring, we must be found in Christ, to whom they are made. Faith discriminates the parties, marks out the character of those to whom these promises are not *conditionally* but *absolutely* made from the free and infinite grace of our Heavenly Father. Have I presented the thought with sufficient clearness, so that you apprehend it without mistake? Faith is not a *work* done by us as a meritorious condition, by and through which we procure a right to the promises; but faith is only the hand which we stretch out to receive the free blessings given in the pure mercy of God, and without reference to any worthiness on our part. It is simply the bond going out from us by which we are lashed into one party with the Lord Jesus, in whom are all the promises. These are all vested in the Redeemer—not one thrown into the air to fall hap-hazard upon the head of any straggling sinner in the world All the promises are in Christ; all, from the beginning, concentred upon His head; all are made over to Him, and are held by Him in official trust. Now when Christ administers these promises by His Spirit, He draws us to Himself; and the bond proceeding from the Savior, by which we are brought into one party with Him, is the holy Ghost; and the corresponding bond going out from us, by which we in our turn are united to Christ, is the faith which we put forth under the drawing and power of that blessed Spirit. Through the two bonds—the Holy Ghost, with all the plenitude of His power, coming from Jesus Christ and passing around us, taking possession of us and drawing us up to Him; and we, as this Holy Spirit fills us with the divine life, in the exercise of a true faith, embrace that Savior:—and so we become one with Jesus by a bond from Christ to us, and by a bond from us to Christ, and through their reciprocal interlacing are made one party with our blessed Head.

Ah, brethren, how can the promises fail when they are, in the first instance, given to Christ as the Trustee of His people; and when, in the discharge of that trust, He has perfectly fulfilled all the conditions upon which they were ever suspended? How can they fail? Every solitary condition upon which they hang has been fulfilled. Where is there room for doubt? Christ, who is responsible for these promises, has fulfilled every stipulation; and now He stands saying, "Come unto me, and I will bestow upon you the salvation of God." As the call falls upon the outward ear, the Holy Spirit carries it to the ear of the heart: We are brought into living union with Him; and the promises, which are reposited in Him, become our eternal inheritance and portion.

4. *The Lord Jesus Christ has purchased for us the life to which all*

these promises relate. When God in the beginning made man in His own image and a subject under law, how was He to protect Himself against misdemeanor on our part? Suppose the creature chooses to disobey, to lift the standard of revolt against the authority of God, how does the great Lawgiver protect His throne against the outrage of this rebellion? The answer is perfectly obvious. When God created man He gave him one possession which should be inalienable: He made him immortal; He gave him an existence which could not be alienated here or hereafter. Ah, the fearful solemnity of the suggestion—that whatever be our weakness or insignificance, we have an existence of which it is not possible that we shall ever be dispossessed. No dream of future annihilation shall ever come to relieve the despair of a soul that is trembling under a sense of guilt. God, when He gave to man a soul, stamped upon it the seal of immortal being. Hence the terrible criminality of suicide—the madness of the effort to destroy that which God has solemnly affirmed to be utterly beyond our power.

Now upon that immortality which God gave to us as our fixed possession, the law attaches its lien. The creature, when he comes under the law, gives bonds to the Lawgiver for his obedience; and, to secure the same, the law comes and covers with its mortgage his whole immortality. The instant man sinned, this immortality became forfeited to the penalty. The law, which says "The soul that sinneth, it shall die,', forecloses its mortgage, passes judgment upon the sinner, and he experiences the immediate forfeiture of his life. This is the second death. He must live, but he must live under the curse. He must be immortal as a sinner, but he must be immortal to suffer and immortal to perish. The law, in its stern exaction, covers the disobedience of man with the penalty, as it before covered the obedience with its protection and blessing.

In this terrible exigency, when our whole race lay under that forfeiture, our immortality held in the secure grip of the law, God, in infinite mercy, provides a redemption, sends His own Son down to this earth to take our place, to obey for us, to die for us, to exhaust the curse for us, and, in His expiatory sufferings and death, to buy back the life which has been forfeited. He, as the endorser of His people, holds their eternal life, their immortality in trust for them; ascends to heaven in His representative character, sues out the believer's right to the life which He holds in trust on his behalf; and, when the plea has been answered, sends the Holy Ghost as the executive agent to communicate that life, by the mighty power which quickens the soul dead in trespasses and

sins, and makes it a new creature in Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus, having now bought back the forfeited life of the sinner, and holding it in trust on his behalf, sends out through His word all these promises which relate to that life; and by just so much as the life is secure, by just so much are the promises certain which tell us about it and give us our claim upon it. How is it possible that there can be failure as to the promises of grace, when the Lord Jesus has not only fulfilled the conditions upon which they are suspended, but has actually bought back and has now reposited in Himself that very life to which these promises relate?

5. *The glory of God, involved in all this matter, secures to us the fulfilment of the promises.* Therefore the Apostle adds, "to the glory of God by us." It does not need more than a sentence to enunciate this thought: that God, because He is alone, must draw His motives from Himself. The manifestation of His glory is the only motive which can be an *eternal* as well as an *infinite* motive, worthy of an infinite God. I will not take time to expand how this glory is declared through the salvation of the sinner, except just in three utterances to say three things.

First, that the plan of grace makes a revelation of God's being to us as the Almighty Father and Redeemer and Sanctifier, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, such as never before was made in any other way. So the plan of grace reveals God's glory, because it whispers to us the amazing secret as to the very subsistence of the Godhead.

Then, this plan of grace brings out God's infinite tenderness and compassion and love, while, at the same time, it illustrates the resources of His wisdom and of His power; whereby He deals with the most obstinate problem that can spring up in the administration of His government, and shows His omnipotence in controlling the creature without interfering with the freedom of his own spiritual economy.

Last of all, this plan of grace draws up all holy beings above the platform of mere subjects under law, so that they become adopted into the family of God, and, through Jesus Christ, look upon the face of their infinite Father. Oh, the mightiness of that attraction whereby, through Jesus Christ, the great magnet of the universe, God draws up His creatures in heaven above and on earth beneath, so that throughout eternity they shall no longer stand upon the plane of mere creatures, obeying and serving Him with the cold and distant love of those who are mere subjects under government; but who, angels and men, are gathered into one body, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head, and made the family of God through grace! Christ Jesus is their

Elder Brother, and the eternal God is their infinite Father. What a glory! what a glory! and how is that glory set forth in the grace of Jesus Christ, when in eternity all the saved shall gather around the throne, drawn up to the highest possible plane and made the children of God, and enjoying the intimate and personal fellowship which can only belong to those of the household with their eternal Father forever! "All the promises of God," says the Apostle, "in him are yea, and in him amen." In Him they are *affirmed*, and that is the *yea;* in Him they are *fulfilled*, and that is the *amen*—the two words giving the immense parenthesis which encloses the probationary existence here and the reward hereafter. God spake those promises *to* Christ, and fulfils them *in* Christ and *by* Christ; the yea and the amen, both the one and the other, are in Jesus Christ.

Such is the certainty that all the promises of grace, through Jesus Christ, will be fulfilled to them that believe. See, then, how this Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the all and the in all. The philosophers of the earth, and the men who are busy with the impertinences of this pitiful world, are sometimes overtaken with surprise that Christians think and talk and sing so much about Jesus Christ. Why, my hearers, he is the *all* to us, and the *in all*. He is our glorious Head; He is our adorable Trustee. He went down into the bowels of the curse, and bore the inflictions of justice in our stead. He holds in the heaven of His Father our eternal life, which is to expand forever in holiness and blessedness. Why should we not talk about Him? Why should we not think about Him? Why should He not be our song, our praise and our joy? Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Elder Brother, our Redeemer, our Friend, is to us "the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely." Better than all the schools of philosophy, better than all the teachings of the Academy and of the Porch, are those lessons of life and love which His own hand has engraved upon these pages of Scripture. We are not ashamed of Him. Ye men of the world, on behalf of the redeemed living and the redeemed in glory, of the redeemed who are yet sleeping in their tombs waiting for the sound of the archangel's trumpet, I solemnly and publicly declare that we "we are not ashamed of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." God forbid that we should glory in anything, except in that gracious and divine power by which the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world. Oh, for a faith that could apprehend His glory more clearly; for a love that could embrace Him with a stronger clasp,

and for a hope which would cling to His salvation with greater tenacity and devotion! Yet with all the infirmity that encompasses us in this our earthly pilgrimage, we are able to say that He is all our salvation and all our desire. We "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, our Lord."

See, too, the safety of the believer, if all the promises of God are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Here is the ground of the saints' perseverance: that they "are kept by his power, through faith, unto the salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last time." Mark the emphasis: We are *kept* for the inheritance; and the inheritance is held *in reversion* for us who are kept. God has the inheritance there; and God has us in His own blessed keeping here. The one belongs to the other. Hope, reward, glory in heaven, are all prepared by His infinite love and held in reversion; but the heir must be educated, and the heir must live, until he enters upon the "inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away." Our hope is not in *our* strength, for that strength is perfect weakness. Our hope is in our Trustee.

Do you remember the story told of John Newton, who spent his early years in profligacy and rebellion against God, and was recovered by divine grace to become the holy John Newton who, in his spiritual writings, has breathed a blessing upon the Church until the end of time? How, in a dream, he seemed to be pacing the deck of the ship upon which he was sailing, toying with a ring upon his finger, the symbol of his betrothment to the noble woman who afterwards became his companion in life; until, in his negligence, it slipped from his fingers and was lost in the depths of the sea. As he bewailed his folly and the loss of that which, by association, was so unspeakably precious, there appeared a shining one from the skies, who went down into the depths and recovered the lost ring. And as he stretched forth his hand in gladness to recover the testimonial of an earthly love, the shining one said to him, "You have proved yourself incapable of preserving the trust; I will keep it for you, that it may be safe." He gives the interpretation of the dream: that even so the blessed Trustee of the Church holds in His hand that marriage ring by which we are espoused to Him, lest in our indiscretion we should lose the evidence of the sweet relationship.

Yes, brethren, whilst Christ lives again in glory and power at His Father's right hand, even as the thirsty sun drinketh up the waters of the sea, so does this Sun of Righteousness draw up our affections, so that they ascend in a constant column towards Him: until at last, being translated into His presence, without a blur, we shall gaze upon His

face, and shall be changed into His image from glory to glory. Sinner, have you anything which you can put in competition with this? Given you all the world, and what is it when you die? Given you all its honors, all its pleasures, all its wealth, the trinity of idols which men worship upon earth—and, in the name of conscience and of reason, I ask what can compare with the glory and joy which you may experience through faith, when at last you lie down in the Redeemer's bosom, in possession of the heavenly inheritance? You may have it at once, without money and without price, before you rise from your seats, or go through the doors of this sanctuary, if you only, from the soul, say "Lord, save or I perish.'

XXX.

WARRANT AND NATURE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.*

JOHN iv, 23, 24:—*"The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."*

It is an advantage sometimes accruing from unusual solemnities, that attention is directed to those ordinary rites which pass current under the sanction of usage and prescription, rather than from an intelligent conviction of their nature and design. Thus, at the threshold of our services to-day, questions break upon us, from the depths of the eternal world, like the surf of the sea shore, which gives presage of the boundless and surging ocean. We meet professedly, with public forms, to devote to the service of God this elegant structure, a monument both of the liberality and taste of the congregation by whom it has been reared. But what is meant precisely by this act of dedication? Do we hope, by the incantations of a spiritual magic, to transform this building of stone and mortar into a true and real temple? Can any amount of priestly benedictions put holiness into these beams and timbers? Surely not. Let the wizards peep and mutter as they may, the brick and the marble confess themselves incapable of that holiness which is an attribute of sentient and rational beings only. If, under the Jewish dispensation, the consecration of particular localities was enjoined, this was due to the typical character of that mysterious economy. Jerusalem and Zion were holy, because Jehovah chose there for a season to reveal His presence. It was the Shekinah between the Cherubim which made the tabernacle holy. But the tabernacle, with its chambers and its courts, its altars and its ark, its vessels and its veil, was but a type of Christ's humanity, and of the great priestly work to which this was needful. Only until "the fulness of time should come," did it please God to dwell in temples

* This discourse was preached at the dedication of the new church edifice of the First Presbyterian Church, New Orleans, on Sabbath, November 1, 1857.

made with hands. Now He dwelleth in the incarnate Word, which is "the true tabernacle that the Lord pitched, and not man"—"the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, not of this building." It is, my brethren, a melancholy proof how little we are imbued with the spirit of the Gospel, that good Christians should still "speak half in the speech of Ashdod." A vain superstition still babbles, in the dialect of obsolete Judaism, about temples and altars and priests, as though these were anything more than "figures of the true, for the time then present." As the only Priest known to the Gospel is that High Priest who, by "his own blood, entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us"—so the only temple now on earth is that which is "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit," the stones of which are living stones, taken, indeed, from the quarry of corrupt human nature, but polished after the similitude of a palace, in which God dwells by His Spirit. This dedication, then, imparts no sanctity to this material edifice. In the language of another, "No pompous ceremonies, no solemn forms, no magnificent appearances, no gaudy or golden solemnities, can sanctify any place unto God and His worship, or make it more holy than it was before: and though when a commodious building is erected for the worship of God, it is a very decent thing to begin the worship at that place with solemn prayer or addresses to God; yet, all this human prudence, this natural decency, and all these prayers, do not amount to the sanctifying the spot of ground or the building, so as to make it holier than the rest, or put any such holiness upon it as belonged to the Jewish temple."* Then, "what mean we by this service?" Why this lifting up of our hands, this invocation of the adorable and incomprehensible Trinity, these chants and psalms of praise? We do but set apart, in solemn phrase, this house to the public worship of Almighty God. A sense of propriety would dictate, on opening a house of worship, that God's blessing should be implored upon all the ordinances to be dispensed therein; and the character of those associations should be declared, which are henceforth to invest the worshipper.

But the antecedent inquiry arises, why should men meet in public assembly to render united homage to the God of heaven? If, as is often alleged, and in a high sense is most emphatically true, religion be only the name of man's individual relations to God, lying only between the conscience of the creature and the authority of the Creator, what distinct-

* Dr. Watts' Discourse on the Holiness of Places.

ly is the warrant for these public convocations? Why is it not enough, in the elegant language of Jeremy Taylor, that "every man shall build a chapel in his own breast, and himself be the priest, and his heart the sacrifice, and every foot of glebe he treads on the altar?" It does not satisfy this inquiry that so it has been through all periods of time, and under every dispensation the voice of assembled worshippers has gone up to heaven as "the sound of many waters." The universality of this public worship is indeed fully attested by the seal of history. If, from the present moment, we ascend, through intervening generations, to apostolic and primitive Christianity, our march will be through assemblies more or less august, till we sit down with the Church that was in the house of Philemon or Aquila. If we cross the line which separates the Christian from the Jewish economy, our feet stand upon the threshold of the synagogue, in which, from the captivity, if not from a remoter age, all the parts of natural worship—prayer and praise and reading of the law, were continually performed. With the myriads of Israel again we go up to the holy hill of Zion, where, in the temple of Solomon, or the tabernacle, its pattern, we wait upon those ceremonial and positive institutions which God expressly ordained. Three times a year a nation trod with solemn feet the courts of Jerusalem, and a nation's anthem went up in praise, while a nation's repentance smoked in the blood of unnumbered victims. If again we penetrate the haze which hangs around the patriarchal dispensation, when the earth was young, when the ruler was a priest, and the priest a father, we find dim traces of chosen spots honored with the symbols of God's presence, and where lingers faintly the echoes of a united worship.* So that across the track of centuries, from the moment when we gathered in this assembly to the day when Paul stood on Mars Hill, and from Peter in the streets of Jerusalem to Noah, a preacher of righteousness to sinners before the flood, the Lord's "faithfulness has always been declared in the congregation of his saints." But this universality of public worship binds us with the authority of *prescription* only, not of *law*. It proves that some principle exists in man, prompting to these joint acts of worship, but does not declare what that principle is. Nor if it did, would the mere suitableness of this worship, recommending it to such universal consent, be deemed a sufficient basis upon which to rest the duty.

Nor does it satisfy this inquiry to point out the public benefits flowing from the practice. These blessings cannot be exaggerated, though de-

* See Blunt's Coincidences in the Writings of the Old Testament, part I.

picted in the deepest colors the most lively fancy shall invent. "Religion," it has been well said, "is the ligature of souls, and the great instrument of the conservation of bodies politic, and is united in a common object, the God of all the world, and is managed by public ministries, by sacrifice, adoration and prayer, in which, with variety of circumstances indeed, but with infinite consent and union of design, all the sons of Adam are taught to worship God."* Science teaches that the harmony of the material universe depends upon one pervading natural law. The power of mutual attraction, which holds together two atoms in a lump, holds earth and all the planets, which in the void immense wheel their course. Whole constellations, too—"cycle and epicycle, orb in orb," as "with unoffensive pace each spinning sleeps on its soft axles"—revolve with complex motion round a common centre, the "*primum mobile*," perhaps the august throne on which the Godhead sits. The analogy is perfect. What attraction is to matter, binding the atom to the mass, the planet to the sun, and the constellation to the throne of God, that religion is to soul. Man's responsibility to God gives capacity for obedience to human law. He moves in the narrower sphere of earthly duty, because fastened by a higher tie in a wider and holier relation. While the conscience responds to the challenges of divine law, the yoke of authority will be borne under the human. Thus religion is truly the girdle which binds together the complicated interests of society. Public worship nourishes this sentiment precisely in the form which is best suited to immediate application. It is of immense service, at stated seasons, to bring men together in the mass, where they may feel a brotherhood of nature and of race—where all the artificial distinctions of wealth, position, education and rank, shall for the moment be obliterated—where each shall feel "there is one body and one spirit, even as there is one hope of their calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all." Individual differences are merged, and individual asperities softened, when all look back upon a common ruin, look up to a common Savior, look forward to a common goal, rejoice in the promises of a common covenant, weep tears of a common repentance, and experience the joys of a common pardon. Blot religion from the soul of man, and you have destroyed the cohesion of society; bury the sanctuary in ruin, and you have dashed to pieces the great magnet of earth, which draws all hearts into sympathy and union.

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* Jeremy Taylor's Life of Jesus, part I, section 7.

Still less can we overstate the influence of the sanctuary as the educator of mankind. It is God's voice which thunders here, and the human soul must give back the echo. He speaks of law, and, like the needle to the pole, conscience points to duty. He speaks of wrath—each fluttering pulse betrays the fear. He speaks of love—the softened heart gives its wedded vows to Him who won it. Under a judicious ministry, who can estimate the slumbering energies aroused, and the mental training which reaches thousands whom scholastic discipline never touched? I speak not, of course, of that fanatical rant, whose ambitious sport it is to lash the soul into a tempest of emotion, leaving only the foam to mark its passage. I speak of that discreet, well proportioned, yet earnest ministry, which feeds the Church of God with wholesome truth—giving milk to babes, and strong meat to men—which, not pandering to a taste craving always to be delirious with excitement, chooses to pour a flood of knowledge upon the human mind, and suffers this light of heaven to draw its own music from the soul on which it beams.*

Yet all these advantages, of which only a suggestive hint has been given, do not form the ground of public worship. They fully justify the wisdom which ordained it, and add motives for its due and reverent observance, but they do not furnish the warrant upon which its claims may legally be sustained.

We reach a much higher position when the authority and will of God are distinctly pleaded in its favor. In whatever form this will may be revealed, it silences dispute and rebukes distrust. Whether it be conveyed through the appointment of a weekly Sabbath, upon the lintel of which is inscribed the sentence, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation"—or, in the assurance of extraordinary blessings to such as frequent His courts, as thus: "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and bless thee"—or, in the more explicit command, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is;" the will of God, clearly known, resolves every scruple and binds the conscience. But the divine authority, though recognized as ample warrant for the duty, does not forestall investigation, whether in man's essential nature, or in his religious relations, any reasonable ground exists for this practice of public worship. It infers no want of submission to God's absolute authority to trace the obvious reasons of His holy commands, and thus to inflame our admira-

* The celebrated statue of Memnon, in ancient story, was said to utter melodious sounds when first illuminated by the rising sun.

tion of His wisdom and goodness, by discovering the suitableness of His laws, both to our nature and condition.

There are three great principles, from which the institution of stated public worship would seem to flow by necessary deduction.

1. The first is, that *man, endowed with a social nature, cannot attain the perfection which is possible to him, in the privacy and insulation of his own being.* As in worship we have immediate commerce with the Infinite One, it might seem to be a matter of individual concernment merely. But, however true it may be that religion lies only between the man and his Maker, in the sense that God only is Lord and Judge of the conscience, it is not true that religion contemplates man as an isolated being On the contrary, it penetrates every faculty of his complex nature, and pervades every relation in which it stands. As the moon's motion round the earth does not impede the common and wider motion of both around the sun, so neither does the connection between God and the conscience become less intimate, when the worshipper lifts his voice in the great congregation, than when he breathes his prayer in the whispers of the closet. This "bill of divorcement" which men draw up between the first and second tables of the decalogue, between their primary and secondary duties, as though the former only fell within the pale of their religion, is the charter of that "filthy Antinomianism," which, in every age, has left its obscene touch upon the Church of God. True religion does not more possess man's nature than it covers man's relations. It is as truly a part of religion to love our neighbor as ourselves, as it is to love the Lord our God with all our heart—as much a part of religion to "do justly, and to love mercy," as "to walk humbly with our God." The earth's orbit may be around the sun, but the earth's orbit is also among the stars. Man's duty is to know and to obey God, but not the less to serve Him *among men.* True piety is thus an invisible essence, which penetrates the whole character and relishes the entire life. With supreme love to the Master in our souls, all the hard labor with which we earn our bread in the working forge of life, all the unseen acts of wayside charity—the morsel of bread to the hungry, the cup of cold water to the thirsty, the tear of Christian sympathy for the mourner —all these, like the prayers and alms of Cornelius, come up for a memorial before God; or like the sweet savor which the Lord smelled in the burnt offerings of Noah. If, then, religion, though an individual matter strictly, does not *exclude,* but rather, in its comprehensive definition, *embraces* all the social relations of man, surely His worship, which is but the utterance of religion, may be rendered conjointly with others,

while yet it ascends from individual souls, sweetly attracted by their Maker's love: as the single flame leaping upwards, and "trembling most when it reaches highest," is yet composed of a thousand blended rays of heat; or as the sun's radiance, which bathes this world in glory, comprises myriads of single beams, each distinct to the eye of God, though blending into common light.

But these remarks do not touch the core of the principle stated above, which was, that man, having social endowments and affinities, cannot perfect his own nature in a state of seclusion. It is from this postulate that the whole theory of education proceeds, without which it would have neither purpose nor method. It would have no *purpose*, because if man is to live in the seclusion of his own soul, locked up to a transcendental intercourse with his Maker, why not leave him to the impulses received immediately from God, which alone can fit him for that secret communion? It would have no *method*, for no form of education is conceivable which does not draw a man out from the solitude of individual being into correspondence with objects external to himself. Education takes us out of these inner chambers, and ranges with us through the whole domain of nature We walk among the stars, and call it astronomy; we scrutinize the elements, and call it science; we analyze all the processes of thought and emotion, and call it philosophy; we study the social fabric, with its scale of graduated duties, and call it morality; we combine together the doctrines of holy Scripture, and call it theology; we feel their influence upon our own heart and conscience, and call it religion. The whole is education; which leads forth the anchoret from his cell, guides him in these wide excursions through all the provinces of nature and of reason, and endows him with a wealth of knowledge, to gather which the whole universe of matter and of mind has been laid under tribute.

So, too, man's social nature lies at the foundation of all development of his faculties. We come into being with a thousand capacities, physical, intellectual and moral, every one of which is dormant, and requires to be developed. The great law seems to pervade the world of rational existence, that moral beings shall live together in society, and their natures be perfected under mutual action and reaction. In all the universe no intelligent being is doomed to a solitary existence, but wherever there is a soul it cries out for fellowship. Angels have society in joy, and devils companionship in woe. The multitude of harpers, whom John saw upon the sea of glass, formed the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven. The consecrated millions around the Lamb,

represented by the four beasts and the four and twenty elders, in company with angels, swell the chorus of blessing and honor to Him upon the throne. Let it be uttered in the muffled tones of reverential awe, even the mystery of the Godhead teaches the same: since Jehovah, whose greatness is unsearchable, is Himself infinitely perfect and ineffably blessed, in the social existence of the Trinity. This analogy, therefore, to which we have discovered no exception, in worlds above or worlds below, would seem to teach that man on earth would not be left to solitary communion with his Maker; but that, in religion, as in all else beside, the social element would have scope in the united worship of the sanctuary. When the sinner is again "renewed after the image of him who created him," he is not left a lonely orphan, to shape his own character by the power of his own desolate musings; but he is brought into association with others of like precious faith, that by the law of assimilation and the power of mutual support he may "grow up to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." As a part of this heavenly education, he mingles in those public offices of religion which profit him, not only by the greater promises of grace annexed to them; but profit him also by "the piety of example, by the communications of counsels, by the awfulness of public observation, and the engagements of holy custom.* Thus "the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

2. But a second ground, upon which we may rest the institute of public worship, is, that *it is necessary to the Church, as the visible kingdom of Christ.* It would be superfluous here to argue the existence of a church visible as distinguished from that which is invisible. The latter is the church of the elect, embracing only the mystical body of Christ, who have "followed him in the regeneration." It is, of course, known infallibly to God only, who are the subjects of this kingdom; and it would require a special revelation, in reference to each, to bring it under human control and government. Besides this kingdom, and to a great extent including it, is another kingdom which is visible, and, as visible, is administered by men. This kingdom is the Church of God on earth. To employ the full definition of Dr. Mason,† it is "the aggregate body of those who profess the true religion, all making up but

* Jeremy Taylor's Life of Jesus, part 1, section 7.

† Mason's Essays on the Church, No. 1.

one society, of which the Bible is the statute-book, Jesus Christ the head, and a covenant relation the uniting bond." Now, what is necessary to give *visibility* to the kingdom of Jesus Christ? Obviously, there must be a covenant, or charter, securing the privileges of its subjects, and setting forth the tenure upon which these are held. There must be outward seals, giving legal value to the instrument, the use of which shall involve a solemn assumption of all the duties which are imposed. There must be laws regulating the conduct of such as desire to be true and loyal subjects, and repressing the rebellion and wickedness of such as are traitorous and false. There must be officers, invested with ministerial power, acting always under the commission of their lawful king. There must be a court from which the symbols of royal power and supremacy may be displayed; and days of interview, when the subject comes into the presence of his monarch to offer up his homage, and to receive the favors which royal clemency or justice may dispense. From her first organization upon earth, all these visible marks have been deciphered on the Church of God. Sacrifices were instituted, as the mode by which the worshippers might make an acceptable approach to their King, typical of the great expiation which should be made by the one perfect offering in the end of the world Priests were ordained to go between the living and the dead, typical of "the only mediator between God and man—the man, Christ Jesus." The temple was erected as the dwelling place of the Divine Majesty, from which all His oracles should issue. Extraordinary prophets were commissioned to make new disclosures of the Monarch's will. Days of convocation were set, when He would display His glory to His subjects, and sacraments were given to seal the bond between Himself and them. Great changes have indeed supervened upon that economy since the advent of Christ, but not such as affect the identity of the Church, as a visible catholic society from the beginning. The sacrifices are withdrawn, but not the great propitiatory oblation in which they were fulfilled. The succession of earthly priests has ceased, only because the great High Priest ever liveth to intercede above. The temple hath not one stone left upon another, but the true Shekinah dwelleth in Christ—the word made flesh and dwelling amongst us. The long line of prophets terminates only in that Prophet whom the Lord God was to raise up like to Moses, and their treasured messages are expounded from the Bible by living ministers; while the seals of the covenant have only changed their outward forms. Is it not necessary that there shall be solemn assemblies, in which the laws of this kingdom shall be pro-

claimed—when this visible Church, with its visible ministry, its visible sacraments, shall also, through a visible worship and visible discipline, commend itself to the love and veneration of its members? The Church, as the visible kingdom of Jesus, has the Sabbath for its court-day, the sanctuary for the King's pavilion, and its instituted worship for the subject's fealty.

But these considerations lead to the third ground, upon which this great institute may be based:

3. *Since, by means of the worship and ordinances of the sanctuary, this kingdom of Christ makes its aggressions upon the surrounding and opposing powers of darkness.* In strict analogy with all other empires, this kingdom rose from small beginnings. It was first set up, with a written constitution, in the family of Abraham; it received a visible expansion in that of Jacob, whose twelve sons were the twelve foundation stones of the Jewish church. This kingdom, cradled for a season in the fruitful land of Egypt, soon outgrows the limits of the family and tribe, and comes forth a nation. In Canaan, hedged around with peculiar and restrictive ceremonial institutes, it lives without further development till He came who was the end of all the types. For a season we see it reduced within narrower limits, and must search for it in the house, as in the days of Abraham and Isaac; but it is only to burst forth with a new enlargement, and assume its proper attribute of universality. Now is fulfilled the vision of Daniel: "The little stone cut out without hands shall smite the feet of the great image, and then it becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth." From the moment the Church entered the Christian dispensation, throwing off the restrictions* by which it was swathed in the Jewish, it is confessed to be an *aggressive* kingdom. To its sovereign there is "given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." The genius of the two dispensations, the Jewish and the Christian, is strongly expressed in the opposite directions given to both: under the former the language is, go up to Jerusalem; under the latter the language is, go into all the world. In the one, the Church is stationary; moored to the hill of Zion by peculiar and local rites, placed in the centre of earth, as at that time

* See this contrast beautifully presented in a Missionary Sermon, one of the earlier performances of Dr. Harris, which made him known to the church at large.

known, she throws her light over surrounding nations, and attracts them to her. In the other, all her fastenings cut asunder, she is sent forth upon a great itineracy; no longer stationary, but aggressive, she goes to the nations who before were commanded to come to her.* In the great commission of her Lord, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, we trace the genius of the New Testament Church. It is no exaggeration of pious zeal when it is reiterated that the Church of Jesus Christ is essentially a Missionary Church, and her aggressiveness set forth as a capital and distinctive feature.

But not only is this kingdom thus aggressive; its encroachments are made through a peculiar warfare. Its only weapons are persuasion and argument. The arrows that are "sharp in the hearts of the king's enemies," are drawn only from the quiver of eternal truth. The only sword drawn from its sheath is the sword of the Spirit, which cutteth to the heart. The only captivity it inflicts is that which "brings every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." The commission under which its armies go forth to conquest, enjoins that they shall gain their victories simply by teaching all nations, baptizing them in the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. And thus the appropriate symbol of this kingdom is that of the angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth. Now, because this kingdom claims to be thus universal, and makes its aggressions not by the arm of violence, but by the gracious words of its Lord and Head, therefore these public convocations are required. Wherever its subjects may be scattered, their oath of allegiance binds them to spread a tent, and invite the nations to a parley. "The great trumpet must be blown, to assemble the outcasts in Egypt, that they may worship the Lord in the holy mount." They must take up the song of the angel to the shepherds, and proclaim "the tidings of great joy to all people, that unto them a Savior is born, who is Christ, the Lord." Whatever necessity may have existed in former ages for the public assembly, it must be a prime feature of the Church in the present economy. Without public proclamation, the Gospel must be stifled in its utterance, and cannot prove itself the power of God and the wisdom of God unto the salvation of man.

Thus far, my brethren, we have discussed the *warrant* for public worship, which we find to be the will of God expressly revealed to us, having yet a natural foundation in the social constitution of man, pertaining to the Church as the visible kingdom of Christ, and necessary to the aggressions which she is pledged to make against the world of

darkness. It will be necessary now to consider the *nature* of this worship, as deducible from the text. The woman of Samaria proposes to Christ to settle the dispute so jealously maintained between her people and the Jews, whether the worship of God had been appointed on the hill of Zion, or on Mount Gerizim, from which of old His blessings had been so solemnly pronounced. To this inquiry Christ replies by showing its utter impertinence. The time had now come when the predictive challenge of Isaiah was to be both explained and fulfilled: "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; where is the house that ye build unto me, and where is the place of my rest? for all these things hath my hand made, and all these things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." The dispensation of types is brought to a close. Henceforth, "he that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol." Among these vanishing shadows is the gorgeous temple on Mount Moriah. Shall He who "inhabits the praises of eternity," who "fills immensity with his presence," be confined within a material edifice? Behold, the frame of nature is His, and the broad earth His footstool. God is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, without body or parts; it is appropriate, therefore, that He be universally worshipped, and with a spiritual homage. The Jewish law was but a "shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ." Since, then, Christ, this body, is come, God is to be worshipped not through the shadow, but in the substance, which is Christ. The worship, therefore, which God now accepts, both secret and social, is a worship not restricted to places or to seasons; it is a worship not ceremonial and typical, but spiritual and internal, the substance and body of which is the truth itself—the truth known and felt in its power —the truth as it is in Jesus.

There is obviously the distinction between what is natural and what is ceremonial in public worship: the former having a ground in nature, so that reason itself would enforce it upon the conscience; the latter deriving its entire claim from the express appointment of God. In the first class will fall such acts as prayer and praise and study of the Word, which, having their ground in reason itself, never can become obsolete with changing dispensations. In the second class will range such symbolical rites as circumcision or baptism, the passover or the eucharist. For though these symbols may illustrate vital and holy truths, yet the

will of God alone can make one symbol more obligatory than another, or, indeed, bind us to a symbolical worship at all. The Jewish dispensation was marked by the predominance of the ceremonial over the natural parts in public worship. The courses of the priests, the splendor of their vestments, the variety and number of the sacrifices, the magnificence of the temple, the oblations and the incense—all gave denomination to Judaism, as a system of types and emblems. But under the Christian economy, the natural parts of worship, those having an evident reason and propriety, and not possessing authority from positive institution alone—these are brought into bolder relief from the suppression or withdrawal of the symbolical.

This seems to be intimated in the contrast drawn by our Savior, between the typical and the spiritual, in the text: "The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father; but the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." Where to worship in the spirit is antithetical to worshipping in Jerusalem, which cannot be explained, unless these terms are the synonymes of a symbolical and a spiritual worship.

This language suggests, too, a certain connecion between the *devotions* and the *instructions* of the sanctuary. For though the term truth, in the phrase "in spirit and in truth," does not primarily refer to any dogmatic statements, yet, referring to Christ as the substance of the shadowy economy of the temple, it doubtless implies full instruction in all that relates to His person and work. Permit me to dwell with a little minuteness upon what may be termed the Protestant view of public worship, touching the stress which is to be laid upon the office of instruction in the sanctuary. There are three lines of thought which conduct to the inference that formal exposition of truth is a necessary service in the Christian Church. It follows—

1. *From the complete withdrawal of the ancient types.* It is, I conceive, a low and narrow view to take of these, that they were designed as artistic representations, to captivate the senses and delight the imagination. If no inspired interpretation of them had been afforded, drawing out stores of spiritual meaning, it would be more pardonable to speak of them as giving a scenic effect—as it were, dramatizing the worship of God, enlisting the sentiment, and drawing forth the poetry that lurks far down in the nature of every man. The epistle to the Hebrews is sufficient to overthrow this frigid hypothesis. The Apostle undertakes to unfold the priesthood of Christ, and he does this by simply expounding the import of the tabernacle and its furniture, the priesthood

in its courses, the sacrifices and purgations of the old law. We are therefore to regard these types as being really an exhibition of spiritual truths to the Jewish mind—a sacred hieroglyph, curious enough to provoke inquiry, yet plain enough to be resolved upon investigation. They were indeed a language, peculiar in construction, yet pregnant with meaning, if the key were only given to unlock the cypher. It does not concern me now to vent an opinion how far this language was actually interpreted—whether the pious Jew was permitted to read the high import of these mysterious symbols, or whether, like prophecy, which is a cypher of another kind, the key is reserved till the day of fulfilment. Should I hazard a conjecture upon this collateral point, it would be that types and prophecies both were, in their broad outline, sufficiently understood, at least by the spiritually enlightened—while yet the details of both were shut up in mystery, and all questions as to the mode and time of fulfilment lost themselves in the uncertainties of conjecture. If, then, these types were a species of language, speaking to the eye, and reaching the reason through the imagination—if the temple, with its august ceremonies, was but a symbolical painting, somewhat like the sculptured pannels and painted walls recently disinterred from the ruins of Nineveh, then they cannot be withdrawn from a dispensation claiming to be more perfect, without the substitution of a better form of instruction. What this form shall be is most easily and reasonably determined. In Judaism Christ was *to come;* His advent was future. In Christianity, Christ *has come;* the event is past. In the one case, the representation of what is future cannot but be symbolic; in the other, the representation of what is past cannot but be historic. In the New Testament Church, therefore, the instruction must consist of plain statements of actual facts—the facts of Christ's life, and the facts of His death—and of didactic expositions of duty founded upon these facts. The change which has taken place is just what we would antecedently expect from the chronology of the two economies. When Christ's advent was future, it was foreshadowed by types and emblems. When Christ did come, these types were cancelled, and He is now held forth in the sanctuary as a fact, a substance and a body; and the instructions which are given are instructions concerning a fact; they are plain, literal, historic and didactic.

2. *The same conclusion as to the necessity of formal instruction in the sanctuary follows, from the connection of preaching with the final spread of Christianity.* "There were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." This is the pæan with

which prophecy celebrates the close of this latter age of the Church. But how is this unearthly kingdom to penetrate all earthly kingdoms, and include them? Go preach my Gospel, saith the Lord, for it is by the foolishness of preaching He will save them that believe, and "the foolishness of God is wiser than men." But who shall preach? Even they that are sent. And where shall they preach? What ye have heard in the ear, says Christ, proclaim upon the house-tops. If what has before been said, respecting the aggressiveness of Christianity, be true—and if this universal extension is to be achieved by the simple proclamation of Gospel truths—then the importance of the pulpit cannot be overlooked; and among the appointments of the sanctuary, the exposition of Bible truth must be prominent.

3. *But the necessity of instruction in the house of God will appear further from the relation of knowledge to worship.* I am free to admit that the main design of these public assemblies is devotion; yet it cannot be a blind and senseless devotion of the body, without the soul. "God is a spirit"—and how can he be pleased with what is corporeal? If, for the purpose of instructing men in the high mysteries of redemption, atonement and pardon, He for a season enjoined bloody sacrifices, it was not because He delighted either in the fat of rams or the blood of bulls. When He made man in His own image, He gave him a thinking soul, and endowed that soul with knowledge and holiness. And the sacrifices acceptable to Him are those of a broken and contrite spirit. "To love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." But how can this devotion be spiritual without the truth? To worship God as a spirit, and with the spirit, there must be knowledge of God: who He is—"infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, justice, goodness, holiness and truth;" there must be knowledge of God in His relations to us as our Ruler, Redeemer and Creator; there must be knowledge of His law, setting forth His claims upon our love and service; and there must be knowledge of the way of approach and communion with Him, as it is graphically summed up by Dr. Owen: "This is the general order of Gospel worship, the great rubric of our service. Here, in general, lieth its decency, that it respects the mediation of the Son, through whom we have access, and the supplies and assistance of the Spirit, and regard unto God as a Father. He that fails in any one of these, breaks all order in Gospel worship. This is the great canon, which, if it be neglected, there is no decency in whatever else is done in

this way."* How, then, can there be true worship without instruction, for these things are known only as God has revealed them, and He has written them in a book. Instruction, therefore, is needed in the sanctuary, to afford the materials of devotion; for the knowledge of God, and His love, supplies the theme of our song.

It strikingly illustrates, too, the wisdom of the divine arrangements, that in the sanctuary instruction and devotion are so inseperably coupled, and the former always in subordination to the latter. If Christianity were taught only in the portico and lyceum, it is hard to see how it should be kept from sliding into a sublime philosophy. But taught in the sanctuary, after offices of prayer and praise, and taught as a means to these, it is retained in the heart as religion. The devotions of the sanctuary exercise a secret, but not the less powerful, check upon that spirit of unlicensed speculation which, in reference to the Deity, is always profane—while, again, these instructions react powerfully upon the devotion of the worshipper, to enliven and support it. They supply oxygen to the flame, so that the vestal fire burns without extinction upon the altar within.

It is somewhat a nice point to adjust the instructions and devotions of the sanctuary, so that they shall be mingled in due proportion. Ritualism, on the one hand, so multiplies the offices of prayer and thanksgiving, as to thrust aside the exposition of doctrine. Rationalism, on the other hand, spins out discourse till the spirit of devotion is smothered under the weight of human speculations. Romanists, for example, as types of the first, substituting the Church for Christ, and cutting off all access to God save through the priesthood, have no occasion to bring divine truth upon the conscience and heart, and the sermon is ignored. Protestants, on the contrary, who maintain the individual responsibility of men to God, and cannot propose to be proxies for others in this concern, rest upon the truth, as the great medium of spiritual communion with God. In proportion, therefore, as the Protestant spirit prevails, is attention given to the preaching of the Word. The exact measures of the two may not be determined alike by all. But the very genius of Christianity requires that copious instruction shall be given—that this instruction shall hinge upon the vital truths concerning the grace of the Gospel—that it shall be conveyed, not in a dry and scholastic form, but in that practical and experimental form which shall glide most easily into frames of devotion.

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* Sermon on the Nature and Beauty of Public Worship

I cannot forbear, even at the hazard of wearying you, from touching upon another feature of Christian worship, clearly implied in the contrasted expressions of the text, viz: *its pre-eminent simplicity.* When Christ says, "The true worshippers shall worship the Father, not in Jerusalem, but in spirit," the antithesis lies not in the language, but in the sentiment. He does not mean to say that spiritual worship could not be rendered at Jerusalem as elsewhere. Jerusalem is here only another name for Judaism,* the "Jerusalem which is in bondage with her children;" and to worship in Jerusalem is only the formula for a ceremonial and symbolical service. Here, then, are two facts: first, that the only instance in which God has enjoined a splendid and imposing ritual upon the Church, was under a dispensation clearly typical, when the truth was taught by emblems; and second, that this picturesque and ceremonial service has been unquestionably withdrawn, being supplanted by another that is spiritual and simple. As regards the splendor of that ancient service, the following language was uttered by one of the great divines of the seventeenth century:† "Mo ical worsh p, as celebrated in Solomon's temple, out-did all the glory and splendor that ever the world, in any place, in any age, from the foundation of it, ever enjoyed. How glorious was it, when the house of Solomon stood in its greatest order and beauty, all overlaid with gold—thousands of priests and Levites ministering in their orders, with all the most solemn musical instruments that David found out, and the great congregation assembled, of hundreds of thousands, all singing praises to God! Let any man in his thoughts a little compare the greatest, most solemn, pompous and costly worship, that any of the sons of men have, in these latter days, invented and brought into the Christian Church, with this of the Judaical. Take the Cathedral of Peter, in Rome—bring in the Pope and all his Cardinals, in all their vestments, habiliments and ornaments—fill their choir with the best singers they can get—set out and adorn their images and pictures to the utmost that their treasures and superstitions will reach to—then compare it with Solomon's Temple, and the worship thereof, and he shall quickly find that it holds no proportion with it—that it is all a toy, a thing of nought in comparison of it." Yet this splendid, pompous and costly ritual, has been cancelled by the authority which ordained it.‡ After all, it was but a veil, which Moses

* Brown on Galatians, page 235.

† Dr. Owens' Discourse on the Nature and Beauty of Gospel Worship.

‡ "The divine command is the only basis of religious duty; and will-wor-

put over his face, which the Spirit of the Lord hath taken away—that "we all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, may be changed into the same image from glory to glory." These were but "the elements of the world," under "the bondage" of which the children of God were, "until the time appointed of the Father." The glory of this economy is that it is "the ministration of the Spirit;" who being present, as "the anointing which teacheth the believer, and is truth, and is no lie," has forever destroyed that dim, ceremonial service which, like the shadows of a magic-lantern, was "only a figure of the true." To introduce, therefore, pomps and rites into Christian worship, with a view to make it impressive and gorgeous, is to Judaize it.* If the intention be only to give splendor and dignity to the service, by rites which have no emblematic signification, then it is "a show of wisdom in will-worship." The whole is thereby rendered impertinent and trifling, since the Church never had, even in the days of ceremonial observance, a ritual that was void of significance. The argument is complete either way: If the ritual be emblematic of truth, then we have gone back to Judaism, reconstructing, in part at least, a system that by God's will has "decayed and vanished away;" if it be only sensuous and imaginative,

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ship of every description has uniformly drawn down the expression of the divine displeasure. With regard to whatsoever partakes of the essential nature of worship, it may safely be affirmed, that what is not commanded is virtually forbidden. This constitutes the broad line of distinction between the worship of faith and the offerings of superstition; the former alone partakes of the character of obedience, being founded upon the knowledge and recognition of the divine will. Whatsoever is not of faith, whatsoever has not the divine command as its basis, is not obedience, but sin."—*Conder on Protestant Non-Conformity*, page 165.

* "Idolatry has reference either to the *object* or to the *mode* of religious worship. * * * But idolatrous corruptions of the *mode* of worship are not less at variance with the religious principle. 'The descent of the human mind, from the spirit to the letter, from what is vital and intellectual to what is ritual and external in religion is,' remarks an eloquent writer, 'the true source of idolatry and superstition, in all the multifarious forms which they have assumed.' Whatsoever tends to compromise the spiritual for the sensible, whatsoever transfers the attention of the mind from invisible realities to material forms, directly opposes the spirit and tendency of Christianity. All attempts, therefore, to conciliate the homage of the irreligious to Christianity, by an accommodation of its principles, its rites, or its practical requisitions, to the imagination and taste of worldly men, in whatsoever motives they may originate, must be stigmatized as frustrating the primary design of the Gospel, and as partaking of the nature of idolatrous corruption of religion."—*Conder on Protestant Non-Conformity*, pages 20, 21.

then the arrogance is insufferable, which offers to God what is confessedly unmeaning, to amuse, as it were, His heavy hours with the gauds and mimicking shows that children love.

If this congregation has erected a building more grand and beautiful in architectural design than that which the fire devoured, it has been done only in the exercise of a lawful taste, about a matter in itself morally indifferent. But I would prefer to see it razed to the earth, and its foundation stones uncovered, than it should be supposed to lend a sanction to that stupid jargon of a so called ecclesiastical architecture, whose ghostly mutterings have of late, through some Witch of Endor, been pouring upon us from the dark ages. Be it known unto all men, that here is none of "that beauty and glory which carving, and painting, and embroidered vestures, and musical incantations, and postures of veneration, do give unto divine service."* No "dim religious light" streams here, through storied panes, to cheat us with its likeness to the twilight hour. Here have we no wooden cross, no altar, no human priest, no emblematic furniture, "no ceremonies, vestments, gestures, ornaments, music, altars, images, paintings, with prescriptions of great bodily veneration."† We know but one sacrifice—that which was offered up once for all, the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world. We know but one Priest, who with His own blood has entered through the vail into the Holiest, having obtained eternal redemption for us. We know but one temple on earth—that which is made such by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the saints of the most High God. We know but one Gospel, to-wit: "that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses;" and with Paul we say, if an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto us than that we have received, let him be accursed. As for this building, my brethren, beautiful as it may be in our eyes, let it please us to call it only a plain Presbyterian meeting-house. The glory we see in it, let it not be the glory of its arches and timbers—not the glory of its lofty and graceful spire, pointing ever upwards to that home the pious shall find in the bosom of God—not the glory found in the eloquence or learning of those who, through generations, shall here proclaim the Gospel—nor yet the glory traced in the wealth and fashion, refinement and social position, of those who throng its courts. But let its glory be "the glory of the Lord risen upon it!" Let its glory be the promises of the covenant en-

* Dr. Owens' Discourse, "The Chamber of Imagery."

† Dr. Owens' Discourse, "The Chamber of Imagery."

graved upon its walls, which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Let its glory be found in the purity, soundness and unction of its pastors—in the fidelity and watchfulness of its elders—in the piety and godliness of its members. Let its glory be as a birth-place of souls, where shall always be heard the sobs of awakened penitence, and the songs of new-born love. Let its glory be the spirituality of its worship, its fervent prayers, its adoring praise, and the simplicity and truth of its ordinances and sacraments. Let its glory be the communion of saints, who here have fellowship one with another, and also with the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. Let its glory be as the resting place of weary pilgrims, toiling on towards the heavenly city—the emblem of that Church above,

> "Where congregations ne'er break up,
> And Sabbaths never end."

And now, "to the only wise God, the King eternal, immortal and invisible"—to God, "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders"—to God, who "is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, justice, goodness, holiness and truth"—to God, the Father Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth—to God, the Son, the brightness of the Father's glory, and express image of His person—to God, the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son—to the service of the adorable and incomprehensible Trinity, we solemnly dedicate this building, with all that appertains to it. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of Hosts—he is the King of glory." And now, "O Lord God of Israel, which keepest covenant and showest mercy unto thy servants that walk before thee with all their hearts! Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which we have built! Have respect, therefore, to the prayers and supplications of thy servants; let thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place! Here choose Zion, and desire it for an habitation. Here abundantly bless her provision, and satisfy her poor with bread. Arise, O Lord God, into thy resting-place—thou, and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints shout aloud for joy. Let these walls be called salvation, and these gates praise."

XXXI.

CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE.

JOHN xvii, 24:—"*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*"

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Every portion of it, therefore, rests upon the footing of equal authority; whether prophecy, or biography, or history, or poetry, or doctrine, or promise, or warning. It would be exceedingly presumptuous to exalt one part of it to undue pre-eminence above the rest. Yet if we might cling with greater fondness to any words, they would be those uttered by the Master Himself. As the Revealer of God, He is the Head of the whole prophetic dispensation; and while listening to His voice, we feel that we are at the source and spring of all the truth which God communicates to man. We would antecedently expect, too, a peculiar pathos in the utterances of Him who came from heaven to assume our nature, and to suffer in our stead. And if it were lawful to discriminate between the words of Christ Himself, I suppose we should linger most tenderly over this high-priestly prayer, offered to the Father upon the threshold of those sufferings which drew to the utmost depths of His nature, and toned His human spirit with the deepest awe. This priestly prayer, recorded in the seventeenth of John, is, too, of abiding interest to the Church, in that it lifts the veil of the upper sanctuary and reveals the method of Christ's intercessions in heaven. Of all the stones which glisten upon the breast-plate of our High Priest above, there is not one which shines with greater lustre than that upon which this petition is engraved: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."

There are two things which attract our notice—the *manner* of the prayer, and the *matter* of it, spreading over too broad a field to be overtaken in a single discourse; and therefore you will pardon me if I detach from the text the first three words, and make them the basis of this morning's reflections: "FATHER, I WILL." Oh, what sublime digni-

ty! what calmness and what majesty in this address, "Father, I will!" It is prayer, if you please; but couched in tones of authority, which make it more than prayer. It is the breathing forth of personal desire; but there is here the language of requisition, which makes it more than a wish. It wraps up in it a pledge of faithfulness to His people; yet not being addressed to them, but to the eternal Father upon His throne, it is more than promise. There is in the peculiar language which I have detached, and upon which I shall insist to-day, more of demand than of prayer. "Father, I *will* that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." Let us, then, seek into the import of this peculiar form of intercessory prayer from the lips of our High Priest.

1. *It expresses the perfect confidence which Christ has in the reality and extent of His Father's love.* Confidence betwixt man and man rests primarily upon justice, upon that profound conviction which we are led to entertain of the integrity of those with whom we deal. But even in human relations, it is the mighty sentiment of love which enables us to draw upon that confidence, and make it available to the practical uses of life. See how the Apostle distinguishes between the two, in his epistle to the Romans, when he says, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." Justice lies at the basis of all true character; like the everlasting granite which underlies the soil, and forms the solid framework of the globe. But oh! how, in itself, cold and hard! whilst love comes and places over this cold, hard justice, the fruitful and productive soil which is covered with luxuriant vegetation. Ah, my brethren, even in this poor world of ours, scarred as it by sin, amidst all the imperfections of the fall, who does not know the power—I will not say of the sentiment, but of the passion of love; the full force of which we never apprehend, until remorseless death comes and tears from our embrace those who have constituted the comfort and the solace of our life. It would be profane, perhaps, to penetrate that mysterious love which subsists between the persons of the Godhead, in the glorious pavilion in which they dwell. We must be infinite, and have the capacity of God, to be able to comprehend Him, and to understand perfectly the relations which subsist between the eternal three, and the outflow of that infinite love continually interchanged between them. And yet there are thoughts lying upon the plane on which we ourselves walk, which may enable us to approximate a higher conception of the love which subsists in the bosom of the adorable Trinity.

For example, conceive, if you can, the power of love in a being who

is absolutely holy. I have referred to the love which is found in the consciousness of the sinful and imperfect. Here upon the earth, with a full acknowledgement of all the imperfections that attach to us, there is no language which can exaggerate the preciousness and power of this love as it is found even in the bosom of sinners. But it belongs to the holy to exist in love, as the very element of their being; and it is this which constitutes the glory of heaven. Sin and all its consequences being forever banished thence, it is the world of which love is the very atmosphere. And if we could rise, from the love as it is found in the bosom of the redeemed and of the holy and spotless angels, to the plane upon which Jehovah sits in the infinitude of His being, we should be overwhelmed by the grandeur and glory of the love which exists in the bosom of God. Thererore, in Holy Scripture, He is described by the abstract term itself, "GOD IS LOVE"—manifested to us in the gift of His own Son. "We love him because he first loved us," and gave His only begotten Son to die, the just for the unjust.

Then, the perfect equality between these persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, making them perfectly competent to measure the love which is in the bosom of each, imparts to each a confidence in the same. What is the measure of the Son's confidence in His Father's love, but that, as the Father's equal in nature and in glory, He is able to take the divine measure of the affection which is itself infinite and divine.

As the relation, further, is *real* between the Father and the Son, so is the love *real* which is expressed by that term For I do not conceive it to be true, as is often represented, that the terms Father and Son and Spirit are employed hap-hazard, to discriminate a relationship between the three which is perfectly undefined—casually, as it were, caught up by the hand of inspiration out of the dialect of man, for the want of other and truer terms in which to indicate how these three stand to each other, in the subsistence of the Godhead. No, my hearers, the Father *is* the Father, and the Son *is* the Son. It is the glory of our domestic relations to interpret this to us. These earthly ties of fatherhood and sonship are instituted amongst us, not merely for the perpetuation of the race, not merely as the sluices through which the flood-tide of happiness and of joy may flow into the human soul; but that we may find in them the analogue of that divine relationship which, throughout all eternity, subsists between the adorable Three. The term Father is chosen to describe the First, because it expresses exactly the relation of the First to the Second; and the Second is called the Son, because the term Son

perfectly defines the relation which He sustains to the First, as being His Only Begotten; and the term Spirit adequately defines the relation of the Third, by reason of His eternal and necessary proceeding from the Father and the Son, in the distinction of His own personality.

Now, because Jesus as the eternal Son, is infinitely holy—as well as being in His human nature harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners—He was able to rise to His Father's plane, and to comprehend the length and breadth of His Father's love; and in the confidence which this inspires, He breathes His prayer in language which is imperative: "FATHER, I WILL that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am."

2. *We detect here the oneness of Christ's will with that of the Father.* One in essence with the Father and with the Spirit, there cannot be any contradiction of will between the three. Whatever emphasis you put upon the distinction of persons, you must remember that it is a diversity in unity; and that these three, the Father, Son and Spirit, are the one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. So that the will of the First, by reason of this unity of nature, must be the will of the Second; and the will of the First and of the Second, by reason of this same unity, must also be the will of the Third. There cannot, therefore, spring up opposition of will between the persons of the Godhead. It is not within the range of possible thought, that you shall predicate a schism in the Godhead. Therein consists the safety of the Gospel—that, building its foundation into the very subsistence of the Godhead, as He is the Father, the Son and the eternal Spirit, the whole scheme is perfectly safe, until you can anticipate a rupture between the persons of the glorious Trinity themselves.

Knowing, as the Son, the Father's mind, Christ, with perfect assurance, can pour out His prayer in this peculiar form, "Father, I will.' He need not condition His prayer, as we condition ours. We are called to a submission of our will to the will which is supreme. In everything which is not assured to us by the open promise and covenant of God, and in all matters that are in themselves contingent, we must suspend the petition upon the unknown and undiscovered will of God: "If it be thy will, grant me this and bestow upon me that!" When these urgent desires are thwarted in the outworkings of God's providence, we go down in the submission of our grief before His awful throne, and say, "Not my will but thine, oh God, be done!" But Jesus, as the eternal Son, lying in His Father's bosom, perfectly acquainted with all the Father's thoughts, and knowing the breadth of the Father's nature,

knows that His will is His Father's will, that the Father's will is His will; and, therefore, unconditionally and imperatively He requires, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am."

3. *This language is justified upon the ground of the covenant and grant, which the Father has made to the Son as Mediator.* Hence in the text He says, "I will that *they also whom thou hast given me.*" The thought is reiterated throughout this prayer, from the beginning of it to the close. "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many *as thou hast given him.*" * * "I have manifested thy name unto the men *which thou gavest me out of the world:* Thine they were, *and thou gavest them me;* and they have kept thy word." * * "I pray not for the world, but *for them which thou hast given me;* for they are thine." * * "When I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: *those that thou gavest me* I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." And then in the text, "Father, I will that they also, *whom thou hast given me,* be with me where I am."

In the eternal compact—formed between the three far back in the silence of the eternity which was the dwelling place of God, ere the foundations of the earth were laid or the curtains of the sky were made to hang around it—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, looking in the glass of their own will, founding the solemn transaction upon the secret purpose that lay in their bosom, devised the mighty scheme of redemption. The Father gives all these of our race to His own Son as a seed; and He, the Son, accepts the grant, and brings Himself under solemn stipulations. He pledges Himself to redeem them from the curse of the law; to renew them by the power of the Holy Ghost; to sanctify them by His indwelling presence; and, at the last, when the whole system of grace is brought to its conclusion, to present, without the loss of one, the whole of this redeemed race, spotless and without wrinkle, before the Father in His glory. And now the Lord Jesus, looking upon the parchment of this covenant, and reading there the pledges which the Father has made to Him—and standing upon the very edge of His expiatory sufferings, and by anticipation knowing that He has fulfilled every term of the covenant on His part—He founds upon that fact this interceding prayer, and utters it, by right, in the very language of requisition, "FATHER, I WILL." Look at the Greek of it, if you please, and you will find it is more than wish; it is an official requisition upon the Father for the redeemed, assuming the possession of them from

this time forth, throughout the ages of eternity, to constitute His portion and reward.

4. *This language, thus imperative, recognizes Christ's claim as founded upon His own purchase by blood.* "Forasmuch," says Peter, "as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." [I Peter, 1, 18, 19.] So that here the High Priest advances His two-fold claim—the claim founded upon the Father's grant, and the claim founded upon His actual purchase. He has redeemed them with His own precious blood, and by that redemption makes them kings and priests unto God and in His temple forever. Is not the High Priest and Apostle of our profession justified in using the language of official requisition? Are they not His own? Is not this the language of a proprietor who, in the full consciousness of ownership, under the Father's grant and by virtue of the purchase money which He has laid down for His own, claims His people for Himself? As I shall hope to show you, on next Sabbath morning, when I come to consider more particularly the subject matter of this petition, you will see how upon this idea is founded the desire of Christ, when He asks that they "may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." There is a longing to possess, which is a characteristic of all who have a clear title to any good. Jesus Christ longs for the possession, in the world of triumph, of those to whom He has so perfect a claim.

5. *This language is uttered by Christ as the Head of His seed; and this constitutes it a testamentary word.* It is the language of a will—just as you and I on a dying bed, drawing up the instrument by which we dispose of an earthly estate, begin and pass through all the clauses of the instrument and go on to the close of it, devising our estate to all the heirs amongst whom it is distributed, by the technical phrase, "I *will* this to that, and that to this. If you turn to the ninth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, you find the great idea recognized there—Christ represented as a testator, making over by a solemn will a grand inheritance to His redeemed. According to the analogy of human courts, the Apostle argues that a will is of no force except through the death of the testator; and thus Christ has made His testament, or will, valid to His Church by and through His death. Now, the Savior is upon the threshold of that death, a death which He undergoes as the substitute and representative of His people. He, just as He goes down into the dark anguish which is to consume His soul, breathes out His

will in the language of a testament: "Father, I WILL that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." Hence the Prophet, in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, declares that "he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." Right upon the boundary line between the two worlds, in the very act of surrendering His soul that it might be made a sacrifice for sin, under the conscious pressure of all the woe which it brought to Him, He here, by solemn testament, wills eternal life to all His people.

Brethren, it comes to us with the reflex comfort of a most special promise. It is a mighty and prevailing prayer, which falls back upon our ear as a sweet pledge that every promise shall be redeemed in our growing experience, until at last grace shall issue in everlasting glory. We gather, as it were, around our dying Lord. We see Him, with His own hand, writing the words, "I WILL," upon the parchment; stamping it with the seal of His own authority; and probating the will in the court of His Father; when, rising from the dead, He there in heaven repeats the word, the echo of which is ringing upon the earth, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am."

I solicit, just as I pass, your attention to the thought, that we not only have our Lord's last testament, making over to us, through faith, this glorious legacy; but we have this dying Testator resuming, upon the morning of the third day, the life which He lays down, and living forever that He may be the executor of His own will. How often do wills come to grief, and the benevolent purposes of the testator are defeated through the infidelity of those who administer upon them? When, by reason of death, the trust passes from hand to hand through succeeding generations, there rise up at last those who "knew not Joseph," and have no sympathy with his benevolent intentions. Either through negligence, or through corruption, the will becomes in its intent perverted, and the sacred trust is defeated. But where can there be failure in the administration upon the testament of our dying Lord, when He, who makes the will, lives again to execute the same; and there in heaven stands before the throne of His Father, that He may fulfil the trust which, as Executor under His own testament, He finds committed to His care? Surely the love, that led Jesus in His own body upon the tree to bear our sins, will prompt Him, now that He is seated in glory at His Father's right hand, to be faithful to the purposes of love which He

has already executed upon the earth. "Father, I will!' It is the judicial expression of the Trustee, who, in the administration of the trust, pronounces in heaven the word by which the inheritance was conveyed. You not only see the Testator here upon the earth, in His anguish upon the cross, devising the estate to His people; but you find the Executor of the will taking the very language of conveyance upon His lips, whilst He is in the act of administering upon the estate, pushing the claim upon the Father's attention by the imperative word which He utters, "Father, I WILL that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am."

6. *This peculiar language is the language of royalty.* It is the commanding word of a King. Brethren, do you not know that Jesus is as truly King as He is Priest? Long ago in the prophetic dispensation, Zechariah, to whom the Lord gave visions of glory for comfort to his people in the time of their distress, saw "the priest upon the throne," and "the counsels of peace were between them both" With the mitre, rested the crown upon the blessed head: and the great High Priest, gathering His sacerdotal robes around Him, ascends from the altar of sacrifice until He sits upon the throne of mediatorial dominion. He hears the voice of His Father saying, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool;" "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Then as you sweep through the testimonies of Revelation, and pass from Zechariah to John, in the last testimony which God gives through John's apocalyptic vision, we see the Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne; uniting, in the very form of the expression, priesthood with royalty; exhibiting to our faith the ground upon which the salvation is based, and the power by which salvation is secured.

I do not wonder that John saw also "the rainbow round about the throne;" for the rainbow was the sign of the covenant. It spans with hope the heavens which would otherwise be dark; and that throne of awful majesty, which has its foundations in eternal justice and truth, must needs to the sinner be spanned with this bow of promise. And if He who is the architect of grace—who, in His holy office of Intercessor, sues out the grace, and then, in the exercise of royal dominion, administers the grace—if the Lamb be in the midst of the throne, this prayer shall be the rainbow which shall speak promise and hope to us, even in the bosom of our despair. "FATHER, I WILL," is therefore not only the testamentary word of our dying High Priest, but it is the royal proclamation of our mediatorial King, exalted at God's right hand to be

"a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness to sin."

7. *This language of Christ,* "I WILL," *indicates that the whole glory of God is a pledge that this promise shall be redeemed.* Brethren, God's glory, how it shines in the beams of this noon-day sun; when this king of day opens his eye upon a world shrouded in darkness, and floods at once a hemisphere with light! God's glory, it "sparkles in every rolling star;" and even dark night, when she draws her veil over her face and spreads silence over the earth, that men, in the solitude of their chamber and in the silence of their thought, may more solemnly worship God —even night must hang out her lamps, all shining testimonies of the glory of Him who built them all. But when you have scanned nature and exhausted all her testimonies for the being and glory of the Creator, you must open the mercy seat, and, between the wings of the Cherubim, gaze down into the secrets that are covered there. You must see how the golden mercy of God covers and hides out of view the stern and avenging law, because all the exactions of justice have been met and the demands of government satisfied, in order to see the great glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "We beheld his glory," says the Evangelist, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and of truth."

Ah, He that comes to earth, here on this orb as upon a platform to interpret to all worlds through all space, and to all beings through all time, God's transcendent and infinite love—He is the great glory of God—God Almighty, the Creator and the Preserver and the Ruler of men, found in fashion as a man, with human sympathies, with a human tongue, with all the emphasis that can flow from a human experience testifies that which His divine knowledge assured to Him, that God, in, the essence of His glorious being, is at last nothing but love. He who has power to open the portals of that infinite heart, and let angels and men see the throb of its great pulse, as it is shedding down blessings of law and blessings of love upon all His creatures forever and forever—that being reveals to us, upon its highest elevation, the greatness of God's glory. And now comprehending the nature of His own work, and how that work was to issue in the manifestation of the Father's glory, He can say, with all the confidence that belongs to the Son, "FATHER, I WILL." His prayer goes in its appeal to the very motive which acts upon the intelligence and will of the Creator Himself. Ah, when you and I, in our prayers, are able to feel the glory of God, and to make our appeal to it, from the nature of the case the appeal is an

exhaustive one. It goes to the bottom of all argument. It searches the foundations upon which all appeals rest. It lays the hand of petition, or desire, upon the grand impelling principle which operates in all God's dealings of creation and providence and grace. In the fulness of this knowledge, our blessed High Priest is able in the text to say, "FATHER, I WILL."

Now, brethren, *you see the ground of the believer's security.* Given from all eternity by the Father to the Son—are we not safe? Purchased by that Son at a price which the law recognizes as the complete valuation of the human soul—are we not safe? With the legacy made over to us in solemn testament and will, securing the inheritance that is beyond—is it not safe? With the very Priest who offers the atonement to plead its value in the court of His Father—is it not safe? Did you ever try, in the wrestling of your prayer, to sweep completely over the atonement of Jesus Christ—so to grasp the mighty thought and the principles that lie in it—as to feel that you have measured it completely in its strength? Oh, you and I shall never on this earth, nor I suppose even in heaven, be able to rise to the height of this majestic argument. Only the Being who made the sacrifice, only the Being who poured out His soul like water for our redemption, only He who felt in His inmost consciousness the pressure of His Father's wrath—only He can stand in the chancery above, and before the august court of His Father plead the awful significance of His death upon the accursed tree. And now when you see that High Priest coming up from the altar and standing before the throne, and in the very midst of that throne saying to His Father, "Father, I will," are we not safe? Let the devil howl; let him come with all his retinue from the depths of hell, and rage and raven all over this earth, which he has defiled and tainted with his guilt; let the world enter into fatal conspiracy with the powers of darkness and rage around us, as, like "strong bulls of Bashan," they beset the person of our blessed Redeemer upon the earth: and in the midst of all this peril, in the power of intercession, in the royalty and in the grace of our ascending Head, we are safe; safe in the midst of temptations—safe because, through grace, delivered even from the sins which we commit—this very experience of sin drawing us closer to Him who bore it for us, and making the Redeemer all the more unspeakably precious to our hearts.

Brethren, the ground of our security is not in the strength, or in the wisdom, with which we baffle the wiles of the devil; nor in the resolu-

tions which we frame, for a more holy obedience: but because the life, the eternal life, resides in Him, the Trustee, who holds it for us before His Father, and every hour of every day is communicating it through the indwelling of His blessed Spirit. The Christian is safe as long as he has Christ in heaven and the Holy Ghost here. When the second Comforter comes, fulfilling the purposes of the first, and bringing to remembrance all that Jesus did in achieving our redemption, we are safe. Even on these mortal shores; even whilst battling with the world, the flesh and the devil; even when we pass through the valley of the shadow of death, and our feet touch the waters of the cold river, and our souls shrink back with affright from the tremendous realities of the spiritual world—we can at all moments clasp the hands in delight, and say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." He who leans with the repose of a child upon the bosom of his Advocate and Friend, will find that he is stronger than the world, and superior even to the forces of Satan.

You see, further, from what I have depicted this morning, *wherein consists the excellency and power of prayer*. We cannot say, "I will;" we can only say, "Holy Father, if thou wilt." But then one represents us, who, even in the presence of that Father, upon the throne of judgment, is issuing His decrees, "Father, I WILL." "I *will* that this poor believer down there, weak and fainting, shall be strengthened; I *will* that this poor, benighted, darkened spirit shall behold thy glory in my face; I *will* that those who are crouching upon the earth under the burden of their cares and griefs, shall at last rise triumphant through my grace, and through their very tribulation be made to enter into the everlasting kingdom." We cannot say, "I will;" but Christ can, and does, say it for Himself and for us. And you know—if you have forgotten it, I will put my finger on the very verse that will tell it to you—you know how all prayer in its efficacy turns at last upon that fundamental fact. "We know not," says the Apostle, "what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." What comes after that? "He that searcheth the hearts"—your heart and mine—He that bends His ear down to these groanings that are never uttered—"He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints *according to the will of God*." There it is. There is the whole gospel of prayer brought within the camera of half a verse; just as the most extended landscape is made to lie upon a piece

of paper not as large as the palm of your hand. Prayer is what the Spirit indites; and what the Spirit indites, He indites according to His own divine and infinite knowledge of God's will—and He who sits upon the throne of ultimate dominion, knows the mind of the Spirit as being in accord with all the purposes of love that were ever meditated in the councils of the Godhead. Therefore, the prayer of the believer, through the Holy Ghost, being in accord with the will of God, must be answered or the throne and the empire of God be obliterated. There is no uncertainty when we enter into our closets; and as we pour forth these petitions, we do not beat the air. This blessed Spirit raises us to sympathy with our Divine Priest above, and whilst He is saying, "Father, I WILL," the Holy Ghost enables us to say, "For Christ's sake, who says I WILL, grant to me deliverance from sin and entrance into glory."

XXXII.

CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE.—CONTINUED.

JOHN xvii, 24:—"*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*"

On last Sabbath morning, I detached the first three words of this passage, in order to signalize the method of our High Priest's intercession before the throne of His Father in heaven. Indeed we greatly disparage this in our thought, if we regard Christ as, by hard importunity, wresting from His unwilling Father the blessings which, as Mediator, He confers. It is rather a forensic proceeding, in which Christ pleads His own just rights, sues out the blessings which He has purchased with His blood, and, by formal process, carries to its consummation the plan of grace in the hidden experience of His children on earth. Hence the imperative character of the language upon which I dwelt on last Sabbath, "FATHER, I WILL."

I propose this morning to carry you from the *manner* of this prayer to the consideration of its *matter*. What is it that our High Priest thus *wills;* making His holy and just requisition, as He stands for us in the courts of heaven? "I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."

I. WE ARE PRESENTED WITH CHRIST'S PERSONAL LONGING TO HAVE HIS CHILDREN WITH HIM IN HEAVEN. How touching the thought!

> "Though now ascended up on high,
> He bends on earth a brother's eye"—

looks down upon His redeemed as they are struggling with infirmity and sin upon the earth, and longs to draw them up to His bosom, that they may be filled with His own joy forever. "I will that they be with *me* where I am."

1. *This springs from His infinite goodness, and the love which, as our Redeemer, He bears to His people.* It is the property of an infinitely blessed being to communicate. Just in proportion as we are good, is

selfishness repressed; and a pure benevolence, like a full fountain, sends forth its streams of blessing upon those around us in life. If you rise from the conception of imperfect goodness to that goodness which is infinite in God, it realizes itself to your thought in the distribution of blessings upon every hand. This may possibly lie at the foundation of all God's creative activity. Glorious in Himself, in the consciousness of His divine perfection, and, above all, in that blessed communion which obtains in the commerce of the Godhead, He puts forth His power in the creation of worlds; peopling the immensity of space with worlds, in order that He may, as in a glass, Himself behold the reflection of His own glory. And then He creates in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath, intelligent beings, whom He has framed in His own likeness and after His own image, that they too may gaze upon the works of His power, and rise in solemn and adoring worship before His throne. He has stamped the impress of His own majesty upon all the works of His hands. It is the proud office of human science to go deeper every day into the mysteries of nature, and uncover to us the great secrets of God, in order that we may gather the materials of our praise, and embalm them at last in our song.

Upon these intelligent beings in heaven and upon earth, the infinite God, glorious in His own blessedness, is evermore prompted, from the fulness of His own nature, to bestow His favors. But it is in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, where Almighty God in His mercy undertakes to deal with sinners, that we have the highest exhibition of His willingness to communicate. Hence the Evangelist, speaking of Christ, says, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And the Apostle testifies, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "Of his fulness," says the Evangelist, "have all we received, and grace for grace." Here, in the person of our incarnate Redeemer, it has pleased God His own infinite fulness shall dwell, that, as from a mighty reservoir, it may continually flow forth in the blessings of salvation upon those who, by faith, cling to Him. Thus, my hearers, the Lord Jesus—representing the blessedness and glory of His Father, being Himself appointed as the fountain from which they shall flow from God to the creature—after He has worked out the scheme of grace, ascends to His Father and to our Father, to His God and to our God, and, in His very ascension, leaves His benediction upon the earth, saying, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." It is the outflow of a divine generosity, and of the most perfect human benevolence, as

the two meet in the complex person of our incarnate Lord. It is the language of goodness, both human and divine, speaking from the lips of the Redeemer to the children of want, of sorrow and of sin, and assuring them of the joy in which all this sore discipline will terminate in heaven.

2. *This language expresses, again, the longing of Christ's human soul for human fellowship.* One of the earliest errors in the Christian Church was Docetism; springing, I suppose, from that inordinate love which men have for simplicity in the exposition of truth. Unable to grasp in thought the complex person of Jesus Christ as both God and man, they assumed that His body was a phantom; that as a phantom he moved amongst men, without any actual experience of those distresses which belong to the flesh. He was incapable of weariness, of hunger and of thirst, and felt not the need of sleep; and when He hung upon the accursed tree, those sufferings, which appear to our eye so dreadful, were apparent and not real. This error has long since been exploded; but the remains of it may still be detected even in ourselves, when we fail to realize in the human nature of our Lord that perfect furniture of human instincts, sympathies, sensibilities and desires which enter into the constitution of a complete human nature. Why, He was no more the true God than He was the true man; having, in the language of our own standards which we teach our children, "a true body and a reasonable soul," the two constituent elements of an entire human nature. He was God of God, but He was also man of man; and "being found in fashion as a man," He was clothed with all the infirmities, with all the distresses, with all the sensibilities and instincts and sympathies belonging to the nature which He assumed.

Now, one of the strongest instincts of the human soul is the longing to be with those whom we love. Ah, my brethren, need I tell that to you? How many of you wear the badges of mourning, and draw down those crape veils over your faces! Do you not know all about the wrench, when death comes and tears away from your embrace those who made the joy of life to you? In your thoughts of your dead, have you never experienced that strange hunger of the heart when you long to bring them back and fold them within the embrace of your affection? As you kneel in your grief by the fresh-made grave, and your thoughts go down into the low and dark abode where they are sleeping, you could with your very fingers scrape away the earth which hides them from your sight, in this longing to hold fellowship with them again. Well, our divine Redeemer is our Elder Brother, bone of our bone and flesh of

our flesh; and there in the heavens He feels the pulse of those human affections of which we are so distinctly conscious, and breaks out—I had almost said into the passionate cry, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." Let it comfort you when you are called upon to give up your dead, that, if it break your fellowship with them and subject you to this strange hunger of love, you give them up to Jesus, whom you love more than you love yourself, and who has the same longing for their presence and society above. When death comes, as His messenger, over the threshold of your home, and says to you, as he touches with his skeleton-finger child or parent, or husband or wife, "The Master hath need of them"—"loose them and let them go;" and lay the solace upon your heart that your Friend, who has redeemed both you and them, is longing for their society above. If they part from you, it is only that they may be folded within His arms and lay their aching heads upon His bosom forever.

3. *Christ desires the presence of His redeemed in heaven, as the representatives of His passion and death.* It is a principle of our nature that we value most highly that which costs us most. The wealth which a man acquires becomes precious in his sight, not so much for what this wealth can buy for him, whether it be of luxury or of power, but because it stands before his eye the embodied representative of the industry and thrift and care and anxiety of a long and weary life. The most of those who acquire wealth, acquire it by the practice of a self denial so intense that it has repressed largely the cultivation of the sensibilities. Although they are in possession of that which can in every direction minister to taste, they have not attained that degree of cultivation which enables them to apply wealth to those particular uses. But the grossest miser that ever lived upon the earth, will bow down over his chest and count his ducats one by one, as he passes them from this hand to that and from that hand to this, because they are the embodiment of his life's thought, of his life's care. He has put his whole life into gold; and that gold is the expression of every thought, of every desire, of every affection, which has filled his breast from the beginning of His career until now. Upon the same principle the inventor will gloat with the most intense affection over the instrument which he has contrived. Or the author will linger over the book which he has written, especially if it has been the product of painful study, with a tenderness that is almost personal, with an affection almost like that which he feels for the children who have issued from his loins. They are indeed the children of his brain. He has treasured in that machine which he has invented,

or in that book which he has written, the teeming thoughts of a lifetime.

If, then, Christ be man, having the instincts and sympathies and sensibilities which make the complement of human nature, must He not, in the heaven where He dwells, look upon His redeemed with unspeakable complacency, as the memorials of His passion and of His death? Can we utter the price at which He purchased them? "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." He "made his soul an offering for sin;" and it is prophetically declared that His joy shall consist in "seeing of the travail of his soul"—and when He sees He "shall be satisfied." Do you require any better reason for the joy which Jesus feels in the presence of His people, when they gather around His throne above? As His eye ranges over the countless multitude, the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, all of whom bear His name written in their foreheads, He shall recognize them as the purchase of His own blood. His human heart will go out in the tenderest affection to them, because they represent the costly sacrifice when He did not withhold His very life from execution under the law.

4. *The redeemed are desired by Jesus in heaven, because they constitute His portion and reward.* There is one verse in the book of Deuteronomy which I am scarcely able to read without the moistening of the eye with the tear of gratitude. It speaks to the sweetest sensibility of the heart: "The Lord's portion is his people." He that made heaven and earth, that holds the stars in the palms of His hand, just as I would hold in the palm of my hand a single marble, yet turns His eye from the glories of these myriad orbs, and looks upon this Church to-day, as she gathers around that sacramental board, and says, "Ye are my portion." He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, who fills immensity with His presence, before whose throne angels veil their faces and cry with solemn awe, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts"—He takes the poor redeemed sinner, whom He has by His grace lifted from the pit, and lays him upon His bosom over His heart, and says, "I accept thee as my portion." The Lord's people is *His* portion, even as He in His infiniteness makes Himself over to them as *their* portion. Therefore, my brethren, the security of the Christian amidst all the trials of life and the temptations of Satan! He will not suffer one jewel to fall from His crown. Having kept them when He was in the world, He here prays that His Father may keep them in His name; that they may be with Him where He is, to behold His glory.

Here, then, are four reasons, substantial and good, accounting for the

desire which Christ expresses in the text to have His people with Him in heaven.

II. In this prayer of intercession, the plea is filed on behalf of those with whose interests the Savior is particularly charged—they are to be with Him where He is, THAT THEY MAY BEHOLD HIS GLORY. And let it be observed just here, that more is meant than simply *to be spectators* of this glory. The expression is intended to convey the idea of *participation*, as "joint-heirs with Christ:" for saith the Apostle, "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." It is a "beholding" which fills the soul with satisfaction and delight; as sharing in the Redeemer's joy.

What then is this glory, the contemplation of which forms the happiness of heaven? It is defined in the words which immediately follow: "My glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." It is then the mediatorial glory, which the Father, in His official supremacy, shall give to Him as His portion and His joy. I am not certain, my hearers, that it would not be wiser to leave you with the vague, yet delightful, impression which is borne in upon you by the simple use of this gorgeous, but at the same time, indefinite word. Yet it is necessary that our thoughts on divine things should be rendered precise, even at the expense of the sentiment we are obliged to sacrifice in the attempt. The beautiful light which surrounds us we must sometimes, for scientific purposes, resolve into the colors of the spectrum of which it is composed. It is only when they are re-combined, that the eye is filled with the brightness again. So when, through the prism of our thought, we resolve any of these grand expressions which represent to us the holiness and the glory of the Deity, we must be careful to re-combine what we separate, in order to feel as we should their full import. Let me, then, decompound this glory of which Christ speaks in the text, into its constituent elements.

1. *We shall behold our Lord in His glorified humanity.* "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" and our Master, from the moment that He was "found in fashion as a man," took upon Him a human body, which always bore the mark of humiliation. He was born an infant, cradled in the manger, grew up by degrees from the feebleness of infancy to the full stature of a man. When, in the maturity of His age, He entered upon His public work, He was the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." The little circle which gathered around Him to be taught His truth, was utterly unable to enter into His spirit

or to understand His nature. Even the mother who had borne Him, with all the power of maternal instinct, failed to penetrate the mystery of His complex nature as the God-man. All through His earthly career, our Lord Jesus experienced a loneliness of which you and I can never form a conception. He betook Himself to the mountain top, that in the midnight hour He might be less alone in companionship, through prayer, with His eternal and blessed Father. He was buffeted with scorn, rejected by His own people, forsaken by His disciples, and deserted by His Father In His anguish upon the tree, His heart is broken as it peals forth the cry of unutterable desolation, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" All through life He bears upon His person the marks of humiliation and dishonor. "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."

But when on the morning of the third day, He rose from the grave, you begin to discover the tokens of the spiritual body, marking the most mysterious period of our Lord's life upon the earth—that period between His resurrection and ascension. He enters the chamber where His disciples are met for worship, barred and bolted as it was against the intrusion of any, and disappears just as mysteriously as He enters; giving a few hints as to the nature of the spiritual body, of which the Apostle speaks in the fifteenth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians. The only occasion upon which the human eye was permitted to behold the glory of Christ's humanity, was upon the Mount of Transfiguration; when His raiment was whiter than any fuller could whiten it, and His face shone above the brightness of the sun. The radiance of the Deity, as it were, shone through the body in which it was veiled, showing the glory of His human nature as He should afterwards sit upon His Father's right hand in heaven. When we are raised to sit with Him upon His throne, we shall behold His glorified humanity—behold Him, not as His disciples beheld Him, "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but in that glorified human form in which He shall always be present to the sight and to the embrace of the saints above.

2. *Another element of this glory will be the perfect righteousness through which He has "magnified the law and made it honorable."* Says John, in the telescopic vision which he records, "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." As I understand these expressions, the very holiness of God illumes the upper temple, and this holiness is reflected from the person and from the face of Jesus Christ.

As the brightness of the sun diffuses itself by reflection into the genial light which bathes the earth in its glory, so the divine holiness is caught upon the mirror of Christ's perfect obedience to form the sunlight of heaven. This is the glory of Christ, which the redeemed shall be permitted hereafter to behold. We cannot in this world frame an adequate conception of the holiness of God; because the highest idea which we can reach arises from the friction of our own sin against it in the moments of penitence, and from that sense of pardon and acceptance with God which comes to us through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. But how short is our measure of God's law! How inadequate our conception of the perfect obedience which Christ rendered to it! How little do we know in this world, even at the best, of the glory of that righteousness by which the Savior has sustained the majesty of His Father's law, and upheld the integrity of His government! But there, with a spiritual apprehension, through which we shall be able to appreciate all the manifestations which God shall make of His glory, we shall behold the obedience of Christ as it measures the law in its length and depth, in its breadth and height.

Inasmuch, too, as, through faith, we have ourselves accepted it and made it our own, being ourselves clothed in that righteousness, we shall have a sympathy and a joy in it whilst, with the eye of the soul, we gaze upon it. The blessed Jesus, the God-man in heaven, as upon the earth, clothed now in the glory of His own spotless righteousness, which the Father has accepted as covering all the demands of law, stands before the throne the very centre of heaven. Around Him the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of His redeemed shall be gathered, as so many crystal pillars; each one of them catching the glory which beams from the face and person of their ascended and glorified Head, throwing back again the glory upon Himself: and so, by double reflection, shall the Lamb be the light of heaven, revealing the holiness of God as it is expressed to the creature through the law. As He, the substitute for guilty man, has rendered the obedience in which we have failed; and as we, clothed in the same righteousness, are drawn up by participation in it to a holy and blessed sympathy with Christ in His joy and glory; we reflect upon Him, as He reflects upon us, the splendor and brightness of that glory forever. Such is the import of the prayer, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

3. *The third element in this glory of Christ will be the glory of His universal Headship.* The Apostle, speaking in the epistle to the Ephe-

sians, says, "He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." And the Apostle Peter gives the same testimony when he says, "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him." This universal Headship the Lord Jesus Christ acquired, whilst here upon the earth, through the obedience which He rendered to His Father's law. It is as Mediator that "angels, principalities and powers are made subject to him"—"head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." My hearers, it would take all the time that is allotted to this discourse simply to expand this one thought. I can only throw out the broad suggestion without enlarging upon it. Coming from the bosom of His Father, taking upon Him a created nature, standing in human relations, in our name and stead He glorifies God's holiness through His law forever. Then, knitting us to Himself, He lifts us above the plane of mere subjects, that we may stand upon the highest conceivable elevation even in the heaven of glory. Adopted into God's family by virtue of a personal relation with Him who is the only begotten of the Father, we are in the highest emphasis of the word the sons of God, "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Oh, the splendor of Christ's glory, when He gathers unto Himself, and around Himself, not only the myriads of holy angels that never sinned, but the myriads of the redeemed from earth; placing us around His own person, and presenting us to the eternal Father as the family of grace, rejoicing as we look upon His face and are filled with His glory from eternity to eternity!

And because, by faith, we are the members of Christ, of His flesh and of His bones, we shall have a sympathy with Him in His exaltation, and will rejoice in His glory as head over all things to His Church. The Church: not this little assembly gathered within these four walls; not only the Church catholic, spread over all lands, and speaking all the languages and dialects known to man; but the universal Church of God through all eternity, angels and men recapitulated into one glorious body, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head. Through a blessed eternity the redeemed shall gaze upon the glory of this Headship, sharing in it as He confers its blessings upon them; and this will con-

stitute their joy forever. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me."

4. *There is the glory of Jesus, as all the mediatorial offices are united in Him.* Zechariah of old was permitted in holy vision to see "the Priest upon the throne." He saw the mitre and he saw the crown, as the two rested upon the one blessed head; and as he gazed, he says "the counsels of peace rested between them both." In the Apocalypse the Lamb is seen in the midst of the throne, always exhibiting to angels and to the redeemed that glorious propitiation by which sin is forgiven and God reconciled; whilst the King is seated at His Father's right hand, assuring the rewards and dignities which He confers upon His people forever. We shall see the glory of Christ, as these dignities are united in Him, and as He shares those dignities with us.

5. *We shall behold the glory of Christ in His oneness with the Father.* "Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." A little later, in the same prayer, He says, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one." Said Philip to Christ, "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." The reply was, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" Brethren, it is reserved for heaven to make this revelation complete; when we shall not only see the glory of Christ as Mediator, but shall behold Him as the eternal Son, one with the Father, and thus perfectly reflecting upon us His glory. We go down then with a new impression of the solemnity and import of the term, into that declaration of the Apostle, "Beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Here upon the earth, seeing only through a glass darkly, just so far as the eye of our faith is purged and we can behold the blessedness of the Redeemer, we behold "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." But by and by, when we stand in His immediate presence, the climax of the Savior's glory is reached, when we shall behold in His face the glory of God; and so throughout all eternity there shall be an ever-increasing disclosure to us of all that is ineffably grand and beautiful in God forever.

Not that we, with these eyes and with finite apprehensions, can penetrate the essence of God, and behold Him as He is; for "no one hath ever yet seen his face and lived." But, seated at the Father's side, the

Representative of the Father's glory, having illustrated the Father's perfections in His holiness, in His justice, in His truth, in His compassion, in His grace, and in His love, through all eternity we shall gaze upon that glory which belongs to Him as one with the Father. There will be a higher sense in which His word will be true, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." This will make the Lord Jesus Christ, in the highest sense of the term, a prophet to us throughout the ages to come; and no limit can ever be assigned to the discoveries which we shall have of the glory and love of God, because these are reflected from the face of Jesus Christ, who is constituted our Head, and to whom we ourselves personally belong. My brethren, I can carry you no higher. When we gaze upon the Lord Jesus Christ and behold His glory, we shall behold His glorified human nature; we shall behold Him in all the glory of that obedience through which He justifies and saves a world of sinners; we shall behold Him in the glory of His Headship as reigning over principalities and powers; we shall behold Him in the glory of all the offices which are consolidated upon Him as Prophet, Priest and King of His Church; and then we shall behold Him in the ever blessed oneness with His eternal Father, gathering unto Himself His glory and reflecting it from His face, so that we gaze upon the glory of God as we gaze upon Him forever and forever.

It would be interesting to enlarge upon another thought, as to what must intervene before you and I, who are gathered in this sanctuary, can ever hope to behold the glory of Jesus Christ in His Father's kingdom. I can only suggest two things, and then draw you around this table of our dying Redeemer. Our Lord, as long as He was upon the earth, was a man of sorrows. So with us. He acquired His glory through suffering. Hence, my brethren, the secret of all that we experience of sorrow on this earth. Under this interpretation, you can see that the bitterest of the bitter is to us mercy and love; and you can interpret Paul's meaning when he says, "Whom he loveth he chasteneth." Oh! you must be exercised with care, with anxiety; you must toil and labor in the flesh; you must experience bereavements and sorrows until the very end; you must know affliction in every form in which affliction can come to the human soul, in order that at last, when you appear in heaven, you may possess those principles by which you are made the perfect crystals that can never be dissolved. Character must be formed here which shall be incapable of change hereafter.

We sometimes speak of faith as a thing that perishes, and of hope as that which shall cease; because faith will end in sight when we pass

from this world of probation, and hope will be swallowed up in enjoyment I would represent it a little differently. I would rather say that the Lord must exercise our faith all through this painful life of discipline; and when the end comes the faith does not *perish*, but is *transfigured*—remains as *a principle in our nature* forever, as a habit of the soul which has been perfectly formed through long and severe exercise; until at last we are so woven into Jesus Christ as that never, through all the ages that are to come, shall it be possible to separate us from Him who is our Head. These thoughts, these affections, these expanding desires of ours, are like so many filaments or threads springing out from us and laying hold upon Jesus Christ, all woven into a celestial texture or web in Him—our faith refined, transfigured, glorified, forming an eternal *principle*, knitting us to the person of our Lord so that He and we shall be one forevermore. And hope ceases, but ceases because it is transfigured—hope, which is now ardent expectation and longing desire and believing trust, transfigured at last into the conscious enjoyment of a perfect possession. The hope enters into the eternal enjoyment of what we hoped for; and the faith, through which we clung to Jesus Christ, enters upon the sight of Him, as we look upon His face and rejoice in His glory forever.

Hence it is that God puts us into the kneading trough, and with the knuckles of a hard discipline kneads us and presses us, and works into us the principles of holiness; making us strong on earth to do His will, mighty to resist temptation, brave to go forth in battle and conquer this world for the Master who is our Head; and then equally strong, with a perfectly formed character, to dwell in the presence of the Lamb forever. It is the fundamental law of the creature, placed under the trial of obedience, that he shall, by the practice of virtue, acquire character. Therefore, under law and under grace, God subjects us precisely to the process by which, in the exercise of faith, in the practice of hope, in the cultivation of every Christian grace, we may rise at last with a complete character, which will remain throughout eternity. Then, brethren, do not from this moment ever say, "I wonder why God afflicts me thus, or so" Never say, even in thought, "I wonder why God blows upon my industry, and turns my wealth to ashes. I wonder why God disappoints my toil; and subjects me to a life of privation and pain." Never express surprise that death comes into your homes, and takes away from you those who are dearest to your heart. It is the Lord's way of training His people, fixing a character in them which shall be indelible; that so, by our transfigured faith, we may behold our Lord; and, by our

transfigured hope, may enter upon the enjoyment of the inheritance which He has purchased for us.

See the relation which all this has to death. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," and therefore the grave. In Enoch, whom God took; in Elijah, who was borne to heaven in a chariot of flame; and in those who, remaining upon the earth at the second coming of our Lord, shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye; you understand that even those who do not technically die or go down into the grave, must pass through a stupendous change, in which they lay down the natural body and acquire the spiritual. God is a spirit, and the home which He prepares for us is a spiritual home; and there must be the transformation of the natural into the spiritual. Therefore Paul reasons that, as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly; that, as we are born of the first Adam and wear his flesh and blood, so, being born of the second Adam through the quickening of the Holy Spirit, we shall bear His image in the resurrection. If we must, in our sorrow, say to the earth, "Thou art my mother," and to the worm, "Thou art my sister," add, in the triumphant language of Job, "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." The grave is only the laboratory where God takes to pieces the earthly body, and purges from every part of it the leprosy of sin. But the Holy Ghost, the Quickener, goes down with the redeemed into that grave, and keeps His eternal vigil over that sleeping dust; and when the trumpet shall sound and the voice of the archangel shall be heard, He shall quicken that dust so that it shall rise a spiritual body, to be present forever with the Lord. Let it not terrify you if, in the language of Jeremy Taylor, you are to be "clothed with all the dishonors and corruption of the tomb." It is only that "our vile body may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

When death takes away those whom we cherish upon earth, it comforts us to know that Christ longs for them, that He is beckoning them upward to fellowship with Him in His kingdom. If our thoughts go down into the darkness and horror of the grave, and sad reflections press their weight upon us as we think of them there, let even that gloom be dispelled as we think of the spiritual body with which they shall rise in the last day. There must be a material sanctification of the flesh, analogous to the spiritual sanctification of the soul. We are Spirit, and

God, through the Holy Ghost and by His grace, purges the soul of sin; and we are flesh and blood, which must be transfigured by a material change into the spiritual body, so that in it we may look upon the glorified humanity of our Lord, and be made partakers of His joy.

Oh, blessed Jesus, I said a little while ago to this people, I would that I could explain to them thy *peace*—and then afterwards, would that I could explain to them thy *joy*—thy peace which passeth all understanding, thy joy remaining in them that their joy might be full. And now, to-day, I must say to this people, THY GLORY! May it be ours to say with David, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." But just now we can only gather around the cross, with adoring awe to look upon the suffering by which the peace, the joy and the glory were all procured for us.

XXXIII.

SIGNS IN ORDER TO FAITH.

JOHN iv, 48:—"*Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.*"

In the opening of the second year of our Lord's ministry, He went up from Judea into Galilee, which was the scene, to a large extent, of His public labors. The doctrines which He had proclaimed, and the miracles by which these were enforced, had attracted the attention of the Scribes and Pharisees, who watched Him with jealousy; and it was not His purpose to precipitate their open rejection of Him before the time. In His passage through Samaria, which lies, geographically, between Judea and Galilee, our Lord held that memorable conversation with the nameless woman at Jacob's well; the result of which, and of His two days' labor in the city of Sychar, was the conversion of many to faith in Him. His journey completed, we find Him at length in Cana of Galilee; where, you remember, His first miracle was wrought of turning water into wine, and which was soon to be the scene of a second miracle of far greater significance. One who is termed in this passage a nobleman—the original Greek simply expressing the idea that he was an official in the royal retinue of one branch of the Herodian family—meets Him at Cana with the petition that He would come down and heal his son, for he was lying at the point of death. To this application the text is the answer: "Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." It is a word both of grace and of severity. It is *gracious*, because the story soon discloses that it was preparatory to the word of healing in which the man's prayer was granted. It was *severe*, because in its very tone it conveys a pointed rebuke.

But what precisely is the extent of this rebuke? Can we suppose for an instant that our Lord designs to discredit the miracle, when almost instantly He performs one which was desired at His hands; and when, through the whole preceding year, He had been accrediting Himself

before the whole Jewish people by the splendor of His works? Does not the Master Himself appeal to those miracles when He says, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the works' sake?"

The miracle belongs almost of necessity to a system of divine revelation. However you may choose to define it, by whatever mode you may suppose the miracle to be wrought, the fundamental idea contained in it is that it is an act altogether outside of natural sequences, wrought by a human instrument, but which requires the immediate intervention of God for the purpose of accrediting one who brings a divine message to man. The whole apologetic value of the miracle depends upon the connection of the two things which are embraced in the words of our Savior in the text. The miracle is a *wonder*, because in its very form it has to be aside from the operations of nature, for the purpose of attracting the attention and fixing the gaze of men; and it is more than a wonder, in that it is also a *sign*. It is a work wrought by the immediate power of God, but a work wrought always in connection with a *word*. It is the sign, the public proof which God gives that the word flows from His lips, and therefore challenges our belief.

For example, suppose a messenger should appear in this assembly to-day, claiming to come immediately from God with a word to us, which we are to receive under the peril of our soul's salvation. The instant reply of every one of us would be, "How are we to know that you are a messenger from God? What proof do you afford that you come with a message from the lips of Jehovah which we must instantly accept? So far as we can judge, you may be only a fanatical enthusiast, mistaking some illusion of your own fancy for the mind of God. For aught we can tell to the contrary, you may be a designing impostor, playing upon our superstition and credulity, and bringing the high sanctions of heaven in order to subserve a purpose that may be both foolish and wicked." Surely our demand is reasonable and just; that, if he claim to be a messenger from heaven giving to us a word which is binding upon our acceptance, he must authenticate himself and his message before reasonably either can be received by us. He replies, "I will satisfy you of the truth of my statement, by working immediately in your presence a work which requires the intervention of God Himself. I will do something before your eyes to which finite power is clearly incompetent. I will stand in the midst of one of these cemeteries, and instantly, at my call, one who is by you acknowledged to be dead shall arise from the tomb; I will arrest the process of corruption and decay

which has set in; I will bring back the emancipated spirit, so that it shall again actuate and inform that decaying body; and this risen body, instinct with a new life, shall stand at my side, to authenticate me as a messenger from God, delivering His word." Upon the working of that miracle, the doctrine and claim of the messenger are established. Most clearly, then, the miracle is necessary to a revelation which claims to be divine—among the most important of those external evidences upon which the entire system rests. In view of this fact I repeat the question, can we suppose that our Lord, in this reply to the nobleman of Capernaum, intends to depreciate the miracle?

The point of our Lord's reproof I apprehend to be this: that this nobleman detaches the miracle from the doctrine which it was to prove; asking for a *wonder*, which should not be to him a *sign*; having confidence in the power of Christ supernaturally to achieve works which men could not accomplish, but not accepting Him in His divine mission as the Savior of the world. Detaching, therefore, the miracle from that which the miracle was intended to establish, our Lord rebukes the unsusceptibility which He discovers in this man's mind to that form of proof which lies patent upon the truth itself. Brethren, there is an evidence which is to be found in the nature of divine truth, which ought to be instantly satisfactory as soon as the truth is proclaimed; and which always brings conviction, as soon as the sensibilities of the sinner's heart are duly awakened. The supernatural character of the statements made in the Bible, altogether transcending the reach of human thought to discover, and the exact adaptation of all these truths to the needs of of the human soul, stamp upon the very face of the truths the evidence that they are divine. When the Holy Spirit quickens the mind and heart to see the nature of the truth in its adaptedness to human wants, it is received by an evidence internal, altogether as satisfactory as the accumulated external evidence derived from miracle and from prophecy. Nay, our Lord insists that the faith which rests upon the miracle, is inferior in its character to that which rests simply upon the truth and is determined by it. You recall what He said to Thomas after His resurrection, when opening His hands He showed the prints of the nails and discovered the wound in His side: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." And it is a noticeable fact in this very history that our Lord, having, by His rebuke, awakened the attention of the nobleman and quickened his religious susceptibility, gives him at the last nothing but a word; demands that he shall repose faith in the verity of that

word, prior to the sign by which it shall be verified. Says the nobleman, in the impatience of his anxiety, "Sir, come down ere my child die;" supposing the Master's presence to be necessary to the working of the miracle. Our Lord remands him to the exercise of a faith which shall repose simply and alone upon the word; when He says to him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." It was not until he had retraced the five and twenty miles which separated him from his home, upon the next day meeting his servants, that he ascertained from them the coincidence between the recovery of the child and the miracle-word which had been spoken. The verification of the word through the sign confirmed the man's faith, which had already been exercised, and extended it to his household; so that he and his whole house not only rejoiced in the immediate blessing which had been craved, but in the richer gift of salvation which flows through faith.

It is remarkable, this passion which, all over the world and in all ages, obtains for the marvellous and the supernatural. I simply borrow the specification of another when I mention two or three of the general directions in which this desire is manifested. You find it in those who, in their dreams by day and by night, are longing for extraordinary fortune to drop into their lap, without putting forth the labor by which that fortune shall be acquired—longing for the gift of the fairy who, with a magic wand, shall transmute the base into gold. You find it in those who indulge dreams of honor, and cultivate the sentiment of ambition, without being willing to undergo the sacrifices by which alone a genuine reputation can be achieved. You find it in those who, in the exigencies of life, cry out after supernatural assistance to extricate them from their trouble, without making the effort which shall bring the needed relief. You find it exemplified in those who wish to leap by a single bound from conscious imperfection to the highest ideal of character, without being willing to go down into the earnest and patient battle with what is corrupt and impure in their nature. But the hour allotted to this discourse is altogether too precious to be wasted in generalities of this sort. I cannot consume the precious moments which are given to us here, and which to me are always too short, in striking at vagaries and follies of this description. Let us come back to the religious sphere. Let us look into our individual experience and see whether the censure of Christ does not fall upon us, as upon this nobleman of Capernaum. Is it not possible to arrange a classification which, in some of its divisions, shall embrace ourselves; drawing down upon our head, too, the very rebuke of our Lord in the text: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe?"

1. *There is the awakened sinner, who reserves his trust in the perfect atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, until Christ shall give to him a sign that his tentative faith is accepted.* When the Holy Spirit brings the man to a sense of sin both as to its guilt and as to its impurity, and the bitter cry is extorted, "What shall I do to be saved?" he turns to the Scripture and there reads, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Precisely there in that offer of Jesus Christ to him is presented a finished salvation, offered sincerely, without money and without price, to his acceptance. Now, my hearers, I ask in the name of reason what is that sinner's concern, except with that naked offer itself? He knows that he is a sinner by the most distressful consciousness. He believes that Christ has wrought a perfect expiation for human guilt, and hat the salvation is complete. He admits this salvation to be offered to him in perfect sincerity and truth. What then is the issue? Simply, on his part, to deal with that offer and to accept that salvation. But the man cries out, "Oh, that I could only know that Christ accepts my acceptance of Him; if I could only go down into my own heart and find there a sign, I would be satisfied." He reserves his faith, and unconsciously interposes a condition upon which that faith shall rest. "I want to believe; I try to believe; but I cannot believe until I have a sign and a wonder; and when I am putting forth these feeble, tentative efforts, I want instantly to feel, in some glow which passes over me and which is full of pleasantness, that I have rushed right into the Savior's arms, and that I am accepted into the family of God."

My hearer, in that posture of mind it is, in the nature of things, impossible that you shall have the sign which you desire; and I think that, in a passing sentence or two, I can establish this to your satisfaction. You want the Savior to show that He accepts your acceptance of Him. Well, He can never accept what has not yet taken place. Accept Him then; but remember that it must be an unreserved acceptance, resting upon conditions of no sort. The acceptance must be determined by the intrinsic value of that which Christ has done, and by the sincerity of the offer which He makes of salvation. Under the pressure of your own need, under the conviction that Christ has wrought just the salvation which you require, under the belief that this is offered to you that it may be accepted—simply and alone because of this you are to receive it and make it your own. But when you say, "I am restrained in this faith, and cannot put it forth, until the Lord gives me a sign that He will receive me into His favor and bestow upon me His love," you are interposing a condition, and making that condition a prerequisite to

the exercise of trust. You have not, in point of fact, accepted the salvation at all. You are only accepting it, provided that something else shall be done on the part of Jesus Christ which He has not done. You are unwittingly reserving your faith, and refusing to exercise it, until the sign shall be given. How, then, shall the Lord Jesus Christ accept you and let His peace flow into your soul like a river, when, in point of fact, you have not obeyed His command and accepted His Gospel?

To illustrate this, suppose your desire to be granted, and this sign be afforded to you. From that moment your faith would rest, not upon Christ and the merit of His work, not upon the completeness of the salvation, not upon the sincerity of the offer—but upon the sign which has been given you. Your faith would be a faith resting upon what you discovered within yourself, and not upon that glorious work which is wrought without you, and which is the sole ground of the sinner's salvation. It is an act of superlative mercy and grace on the part of the Redeemer, that He witholds the sign which you crave; so that, in the desperateness of the case, you may cast yourself upon His bosom and say, "Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Awakened sinner, what sign do you need of Christ's willingness to receive you, when the very salvation is the sign itself—when the ingenuous offer which He makes of it to you is itself the proof? What right have you to *impeach*—I pause upon the word that it may be felt in the power of its emphasis—what right have you to impeach the sincerity, the truthfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ, when He says, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out?" Here is His offer; and with this alone, at this stage of your experience, you are to deal. If you believe in its genuineness and in its efficacy, instantly accept it.

"But," says the sinner, "is there to be no self-inspection? Does not the Scripture itself enjoin, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves; know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?'" To which I answer that the point of this self-examination is simply the honesty with which you deal with Christ in His free offer to you of eternal life. You are not sent down into your own heart to find any secret signs from God; but to learn what response you have made to the Savior's gracious call. Now, my hearers, faith is attested to us by the testimony of consciousness. Here is the Savior adequate to all my wants; do I trust Him? How am I to know this except by an appeal to my consciousness? Precisely as I know that I trust a fellow-being—I know it, because I feel it. And if, in the conscious exercise of that trust, you say,

"Lord, I believe," then comes the great syllogism, "He that believeth shall be saved;" I believe, therefore I am saved. That witnessing of God's Spirit, for which you are craving, bearing witness with your own spirit that you are a child of God, must come in the exercise of the Spirit's own sovereignty, in His own way and precisely at His own time. According to the laws of this Christian economy, it will come to you—not when you are asking for a sign, and not when you are seeking to find something pleasant within yourself—but when you are emptied of self, and go, in your beggary and in your ruin, in your emptiness and in your want, to Christ by faith. It is when the Spirit stimulates within us the principle of faith, and we, in the outgoing of this faith, are resting upon the adorable Redeemer—it is then that God's Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we have passed from death to life.

Here, then, is one class of men seeking for a sign; and, unhappily, it is exceedingly large. Hundreds who, to a certain extent, feel the powers of the world to come, are utterly unable to tell whether they do or do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; and they remain in that painful uncertainty through days and weeks and months and years, because they are seeking for a sign; when there shall be no sign given, but the cross of the Master and the great sacrifice which was offered upon it. "He that believeth shall be saved;" and the sinner's issue is simply with the Lord's work, and with the trust of his soul upon it.

2. There is another class who seek for a sign—*those Christians who estimate their character and measure their attainments only by their emotions.* If the heart is flooded with tender feelings, which bring comfort and delight to the soul, it is all well; but if the sky be overcast and God hide His face for a moment behind the cloud, they sink into despondency and gloom, and write bitter things against themselves. In reference to this I have two or three things of some importance to say.

The fact is overlooked that religion, in its experimental form, is quite as much a matter of *principle* as of *sentiment.* It draws upon every faculty of the human soul. It demands the exercise of our judgment and of our reason. It demands the assent of our conscience. It demands the recognition of our will. It appeals to our affections, which must spontaneously flow and rest upon Christ. The Savior has wrought a great work in accordance with all the principles of justice and of law; and man's judgment and reason are required coolly and critically to survey it, and determine whether it be not a reasonable act to rely upon it for salvation. The Savior has "magnified the law and made it honorable," and the conscience recognizes the perfect rectitude of His claims

as founded upon His perfect obedience. The will, which is the determining faculty, lays hold upon the service which is enjoined, and renders the obedience which is exacted. As we see the beauty of Christ, "the chiefest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely," the springs of affection are touched, and they flow out to that blessed Redeemer. It is a perilously partial view which you take of Christianity, when you make it reside simply in the region of sentiment. Religion is vastly more than a gush of pious feeling. It is a robust system of truth and duty, which roots itself in the deepest recesses of our nature. It lays hold upon judgment, reason, conscience, taste, sensibility and will—and brings "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

Again, there are different classes of emotions, and the great mistake here made is that only such as are *pleasurable* are selected as the test of Christian experience. There is the emotion of *shame;* when a man, in his closet, cries out, "And now my eye seeth thee, therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." It is not wholly agreeable in its character. It carries pain and distress to the heart, which is overwhelmed with it. Yet why should it not have its place among the emotions by which Christian character is to be proved? There is the emotion of *sorrow;* when a man mourns before God, and exclaims, with David, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." It is not pleasant or grateful to be thus pierced to the quick with the sense of sorrow and of grief: and perhaps for this very reason we encounter the remarkable fact, that they are uniformly discounted by those who make the emotions the sole standard of Christian character and attainment. Yet in these spiritual exercises —ministering not so much to our enjoyment as to our improvement— the work of grace most deepens itself in the soul. Must there not be a period when the life of the tree goes down into the roots which are hidden beneath the soil? In the hard wintry season, when the tree is stripped of foliage and stands before the eye as though it were dead, it is not the beautiful object that it is in the spring, when it puts on its beautiful garment of leaves; or in the seasons of summer and autumn, when it is laden with the golden fruit. But there could be neither leaf nor fruit if there were not a season of respose, when the living sap shall go down from branch and trunk to reinvigorate those roots through which the richness of the soil is drawn.

But, worst of all, in relying upon the lively and pleasant frames, we

have fallen upon just the *most uncertain test* of Christian experience which we could select. Why, how much does emotion depend upon constitutional temperament! Here is your heavy phlegmatic; and there by his side, in vivid contrast, is your quick and mercurial spirit, whose emotions will boil at the lowest temperature. What is that test worth which, in these extremes of character, requires to be so modified in its application? By what law of reason are you to measure the emotions of the cool, thoughtful, reflecting man, precisely as you would the glowing exercises of those who are enthusiastic and quick? And if mere emotion, especially that of a pleasurable sort, is to be the test of Christian attainment, then I wish you to place your finger upon that testimony of Scripture which tells precisely how high the mercury shall rise in the tube. Where, in the words of the Master, or of the Apostles who expound the Master, have you this spiritual thermometer? Let me see it with my eyes. I want to read the degrees as they are marked upon the scale. I desire to see the mercury lodged in the bulb at the bottom; and to know precisely when it shall reach the proper line at which I am warranted to believe that I am a child of God and am to claim the privileges of grace.

These emotions, how transient they are! Fluctuation is their characteristic law. Thanks be to God that He has lodged within man this power of intense feeling; but thanks be to God that He has lodged by its side the necessity for repose! Thanks be to God that He gives to us the brightness of the day and lengthens the march of the sun through the sky; and thanks be to God that He has given us the night, when the glare of day shall be shut out from the eye, and every sense shall be locked in sleep! Thanks be to God for the power to feel; but thanks be to God that the sword has a scabbard in which it may be sheathed! Let us not be guilty of the folly of drawing it forth with a frequency which shall cut it through. Our emotional nature is like the sea, with its ebb and its flow. The rising tide will roll the tumbling waves upon the beach, only to recede again into the secret depths of the ocean. Similar to this is the ebb and flow of feeling in the human heart. There may be even a neap-tide which will bear the emotion above its usual height; but it will ebb into a deeper depression by its own law of reaction. Are you to take that which is, in its nature, so fluctuating, and make it the absolute standard of Christian character and Christian experience?

Then, my brethren, *it is not faith.* However full of rapture the exercise may be, it is not faith; and am I to tell you that faith, and faith

alone, is the law of this Christian economy? "The life which I now live in the flesh," says Paul, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." All the ancient prophets and confessors and martyrs "obtained a good report through faith, not having received the promise." From beginning to end, from the first look of faith when you said, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief," to that last exercise of faith when in your dying hour you say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day"—it is faith, *faith*, FAITH, even to the end. Exactly like a man stepping, stepping, stepping, in his journey; the last step precisely like the first, and the whole journey accomplished simply by the repetition: so we begin by believing, we go on by believing, we are made perfect in believing, we die believing; and it is not until we step across the mysterious border into the world of light, that faith is transfigured into sight, and with the very eye we behold the glory of the Redeemer But, not satisfied with this law of faith, by which alone we can live and grow, we, in our blindness, go back to *sense*. "Let me have a sign, that I may know how much I have grown in grace. Let me have a sign; let me see something ravishing—something that shall be to me a wonder, and then I will be satisfied." Brethren, we cannot build upon ourselves; we must come out of ourselves and lean upon Christ; He is all our salvation and all our desire. Those who are impatient for a sign will never have it. They can get a sign only in the Lord's way and law; and that way and law is simple faith, in going out from self and resting upon His steadfast word.

3. *Another class seeking for a sign embraces those who need large success as a stimulus to their work.* Every converted man is sent into the vineyard. It may be in the early morning when the twelve hours have to be accomplished, or it may be in the eleventh hour when the task will soon be at an end. But whether it be for the whole day or only for the last hour, the Lord sends every one of us into His vineyard. Every Christian has his place in the sphere which God, in His own Providence, has marked out, and according to the measure of the ability which He has given: and the neglect of that work will only deprive us of the compensation and reward when, at the close of the day, the Master comes and distributes according to our fidelity. One man has genius; let that be consecrated. Another man has leisure; let that be conse-

crated. One may be shut up in a narrow circle where the influence is diffused over few; that is *his* field. This mother may be remanded to the nursery, and have little opportunity for usefulness except to mould the little circle that gathers around her knee; that is *her* plat in the garden of the Lord, which she is to cultivate faithfully. But when apparent success is withheld, how do the hands hang down in impatience! There are some hundred or more of you in this church, who every Sabbath day gather in mission schools the little Arabs in our streets, that you may smooth and stroke them down into gentleness, and teach them the precious Gospel which is treasured in your own hearts. Oh, if these untamed ones would instantly lay down their wildness; if you could, with a sort of mesmeric power, make them tractable and kind; if they would receive Christ at the first recital of the story of the cross, and come flocking, like doves to their windows, into the Church of the Redeemer: under the stimulus of such success you could labor to the end without fatigue. But if it pleases God to test your patience for a while, and to prove that you are honest in your consecration to His service; if days and months and years pass by before you see the fruit of your toil —I just leave it to you to say how many there are who drop by the way in their discouragement and despondency; and how those who remain steadfast are obliged to go into the market places and bring in other recruits to take the places of those who, through indolence or unbelief, fall away because God does not give them the wonder and the sign which they are seeking.

Indeed, I touch at this point one of the mortifying weaknesses of the ministry. If there be a class of men who know the scorching power of this rebuke of the Savior, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe," it is the class which I represent this morning from this pulpit. Oh, how sadly do they come to God with Isaiah's lamentation, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed!" And then the despondency and the gloom darken until, like Jeremiah, they exclaim, "O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived. * * I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name." Until at last the word of the Lord is like a fire within their bones; and, weary with forbearing, they resume the message and proclaim the offers of a full salvation, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. I speak not to you, but to myself, and to all who preach the Gospel, the reproof of the Master, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." What if it be given to us, as it was given to Jeremiah of old, to execute only a mission of rebuke upon the

earth; suppose the melancholy office to be assigned to us which the Savior took as His portion, to be despised and rejected of men; suppose whilst we preach the unsearchable riches of grace to our fellow-men, they only trample under foot the Son of God, and consider the blood of the covenant, by which they are sanctified, an unholy thing—what then? Our business is to work in our sphere patiently until the end shall come; and then, with the apparent failure of our toil, to lay it down at the Redeemer's feet, assured that "we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish." Results! Who of us in this life are competent to measure what we call results? What do you and I know of the articulations of God's great plan of providence and grace? It is made up of myriads of minute parts, wheels revolving within wheels, each having its appropriate function, with motions that are retrogade as well as motions that are progressive, with action and with reaction. Not until the hereafter, when God gathers up all this and expounds it to us in the glory of His throne, can we measure the results. Then shall we know that never was a true prayer offered, never was an honest effort made by a Christian upon the earth, never was a cup of cold water given to a disciple, never was there a wayside charity which none knew except the hand from which it fell—but it all went up as a memorial before God, to meet us in the day of our reward. All Christian toil and Christian effort and Christian prayer have their results; unintelligible to us, but all exact parts of the stupendous and gracious plan which will be disclosed to us in the world to come. And yet, whose conscience is not smitten by the reproof, "Except ye see signs and wonders" in the miraculous success which attends your labor, "ye will not believe!"

4. You will pardon me for detaining you with another suggestion of no little importance: *We seek a sign and wonder in order that we may be satisfied with the Providences of God.* They are oftentimes startling enough. A home, as by the sweep of the tornado, is in an instant levelled with the dust. Hearts, that for years have been revelling in the luxury of human companionship, find themselves before old age surprised into a loneliness more drear than that with which life was begun; and we go down alas! not in the submission of our grief and say, "Thy will, O God, be done," but in the spirit of petulance we quarrel with God because He has smitten us above others; or we condition the resignation which He instantly demands of us, upon some sign in our secret experience which will enable us to justify Him in the sternness of His administration. The grape, it is precious when it hangs upon the vine

to ripen there with the sun; and the grape, it is sweet when we pluck it from the stem and put it to the mouth. But if you wish to have the generous wine that refresheth the heart of man, you must put it into the vat and tread upon it with your feet; you must cruelly bruise it until its rich, ripe, red blood shall flow in streams, which, when purified, becomes to us the cordial of life. And so these affections of the human soul, so sweet to each of us, and inexpressibly precious in the eyes of God, our Father, must be put into the wine-press; and their very blood must flow out as the wine of a full consecration to the honor and glory of Him whom we serve.

"Great God! how infinite art thou;
What worthless worms are we;
Let the whole race of creatures bow,
And pay their praise to thee.

"Eternity, with all its years,
Stands present in thy view;
To thee there's nothing old appears,
Great God! there's nothing new.

"Our lives thro' various scenes are drawn,
And vexed with trifling cares;
While thine eternal thought moves on
Thine undisturbed affairs."

And we have no resource except to poise our unsteadiness upon the purpose and power of God;—in the midst of the desolations through which we pass, to rest simply upon the word of His promise. And there shall be no sign given to relieve our distress, except as by faith we can look through the veil into the heavenly city, and behold the home which God is preparing for us, and the crown which He will put upon our heads, and the throne upon which we shall sit, and the harp already attuned, upon whose strings we shall speak the praise of Him who has redeemed us with His own precious blood. But the song which each shall sing upon his harp will be that which each has learnt under the discipline of time: and the highest notes of rapture and of joy in heaven will spring out of the depths of the penitence and submission which have been felt on earth.

Let me, in the close, simply remind you of the word of Christ to Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Eighteen hundred years ago it was said to those who sought for a sign, "There shall be no sigh given, but that of the prophet Jonas." Let it be enough for us

to remember that "as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so hath the Son of Man been three days and three nights in the heart of the heart." We need no other sign than the great salvation which was then accomplished—until the day when another shall be given, and "we shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven" to gather His redeemed around His throne, and pronounce the benediction, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

XXXIV.

ADOPTION CONFERRED BY CHRIST.

JOHN i, 12:—"*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*"

The careful reader of the Scriptures is sometimes surprised to find the same act referred now to one, and now to another, of the Persons of the Godhead. For example, the work of creation is so eminently assigned to the Father, that we boldly make it our first confession in the Creed—"I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." Yet in the third verse of this chapter it is ascribed to the Son—"All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." Again, the application of redemption is conspicuously revealed as the work of the Holy Ghost." Yet in John vi, 44, it is assigned to the Father—"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." In like manner, we find in Ephesians i, 4, 5, that adoption is ascribed directly to the Father—"Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, * * * having predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Yet in the text this adoption is emphatically referred to the Son, "who gives power to become the sons of God to them that believe on his name."

This seeming discrepancy threatens, at first view, to throw into confusion all the teachings of Scripture. On the other hand, it furnishes a strong incidental proof of the essential unity of the Godhead; since, without this underlying unity of nature, it might perhaps be impossible to clear the charge of inconsistency in these double representations. The whole difficulty, however, vanishes as soon as it is remembered that these three Persons discharge their individual functions in the one great scheme which is common to them all—whether it be of Creation,

Providence, or Grace. In the first two, it may not be easy to trace the separate agencies; simply because in them the divine operations are not revealed with any minuteness of detail. Still, if the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one in their undivided essence, it follows, from their necessary unity, that they must concur, in their distinction as Persons, in all the operations which proceed from their power. Whether in every instance we may be able to detect where or how these shade into each other, is a matter of very little concern. But it magnifies our conception of the completeness of the revelation which is made in Grace, that all the parts of the scheme are distributed between the eternal Three—opening to us the being of God in the mystery of His eternal subsistence.

Thus, adoption belongs to the Father—in reference to the act of legislation which secures to the creature an authoritative admission into the family of God: whilst to the Son it appertains to *acquire* for him the right of sonship, and officially to *bestow* it. The line of thought which I desire you to pursue with me this morning, is this agency of Christ in the matter of our adoption: IN WHAT SENSE HE GIVES POWER TO BECOME THE SONS OF GOD, AND WHY THIS SHOULD BE HIS PREROGATIVE. The answer will be returned in five particulars.

1. *He is the original and sole proprietor of the title, and completely fills up the measure of the relation involved in it.* Angels and men are called in Scripture "sons of God;" because, in their mental and moral organization they were made in His image, after His likeness—and because, in their original holiness, they had a spiritual resemblance to Him. They are beings of reason and reflection, and are endowed with strong affections; all of which find expression in determinate acts of their own. But upon examination the term is, in these cases, seen to be figuratively applied, to express simply the analogy between the two. Christ, however, is the Son of God in the highest and most literal sense. It appropriately designates all that is distinctive in the second Person of the Godhead; who, as a person, is *of* the Father by an eternal begetting. "We beheld his glory," says the Evangelist, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Again, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." And in the first epistle of John, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."

Beyond the fact itself it is, of course, impossible for us to press in our inquiries. We know nothing of the mode of this begetting: which, as

it is eternal, excludes all ideas of succession. We can only say that it designates a precise relation between the two; marking a distinction in the mode of the divine subsistence, which is to us inconceivable except under the analogy of a son's relation to the father. They are "the same in substance;" but are distinguished, in that the one is *of* the other—the eternal Father and the eternal Son co-existing in the one undivided essence, without any succession except in the order of thought. I am not attempting to *explain*, but only to *state*, this ineffable mystery. Only, this fact must be held fast: that as the distinction is real between the Persons of the adorable Trinity, the Second as the *real* Son exclusively fills the relation and owns the title. He is "the only begotten of the Father:" and no other being can share with Him the privileges of this relation, save with His consent. It is His prerogative, as the sole possessor of the title and the corresponding relation, to confer it. And when, in the text, it is affirmed that He does "give power to become the sons of God," this sonship is not metaphorical, but real. He gives that which is exclusively His own, and which, therefore, is entirely at His disposal. And as the Sonship is real with Himself, so is it true and real with those upon whom it is bestowed.

We must be careful, however, to guard against any apotheosis of the creature in all this. Such a thought would not only be blasphemy towards Him, but would involve the most palpable self-contradiction in the terms by which it should be expressed. There can be no communication of the divine essence to the creature: for, upon the one hand, God can be God only as He is separate and apart from every other being; and, upon the other, the creature as such would cease to exist, as soon as the divine nature shall supplant his own. Indeed, even in the incarnation of the Son, the divine and human natures co-exist side by side, without confusion and without mixture, in the complex person of the Mediator. The properties and the perfections of both attach simply to the nature of each; though by reason of the unity of His person, the acts performed by either are referred to Him by whom they are wrought, but with no transfer of properties or affections from the one nature to the other. Much more, then, when He draws the believer into union with Himself, there can be no communication of His divinity. In the midst of all the myriads upon whom He confers this sonship, He must still remain in the highest sense "the only begotten." But as through the assumptian of our nature He becomes one with us, so we by faith are brought into a true union with Him, are made partakers of His life, and become eminently the sons of God. The relation of the be-

liever to God is entirely changed. Originally he was under the dominion of law, for the trial of his obedience; and stood upon the distant footing of a subject of the divine government. But now, united to Christ, this legal probation is terminated; and the relation which he sustains is one purely of grace. He is no longer simply a subject, but a son. He is lifted to a higher level, and draws near to God in a sweeter relationship. He lies upon the Father's bosom, an accepted child. The obedience which he yields, is the obedience of a son: and the smile which rests upon him, is the smile of a Father's love. This new and gracious relation is indicated in the Scriptures by the term adoption, because it depends wholly upon our union with Christ. He, being the original and sole possessor of Sonship, draws us up into the same relation as soon as He draws us up into Himself. Union with Him makes us sons; and therefore adoption exactly expresses the nature of the salvation which is wrought. As the members of Christ, we share in the privileges of that relation which He, as the exclusive proprietor, can alone confer.

2. *Christ gives this sonship, because only in Him we are chosen to be sons.* It is clear that such a measure as adoption must originate in the will of the Supreme Lawgiver Himself, and that it must be an act entirely of grace or favor. It is extorted from Him by no kind of necessity, but flows out from the fulness of His own goodness. Angels and men, for example, might have been placed upon a continuous probation. They might never have reached a period, through all the ages into which eternity unfolds itself, when their obedience would not have been subject to a test, and when a lapse into sin might not have been as possible as to our first parents in the garden of Eden. When, therefore, God interposes a limit, at which the trial of their steadfastness is arrested and they are rendered indefectible in holiness forever, He grafts a feature of grace upon an administration of rigorous law. It would divert me into too wide a digression to show that the *principle* of grace was wrought out in the redeeming work of Christ—having its application in the confirmation of angels in blessedness, and constituting possibly the ground of their recapitulation in Him as their Head forever. But in the case of sinning man, who lies under the penalty which he has incurred, his adoption into the family of God is an act of grace supreme in its degree.

But look at the difficulty by which this is embarrassed. Says God, by His prophet, to ancient Israel, "How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations?" As though infinite wisdom itself was staggered by the

sin which impeded the execution of its purpose of love. And the answer is returned, in which the problem is solved: "Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me." [Jeremiah iii, 19.] The difficulty lies in the holiness and truthfulness of God Himself. If the condemnation, under which the sinner rests, be real and not fictitious—if it expresses the just and necessary displeasure of God against his sin—how, as the subject of wrath, can the sinner be approved as God's son? The solution is furnished in Ephesians i, 4, 5, 6: "According as *he hath chosen us in him*" (Christ); * * "having *predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ* to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath *made us accepted in the beloved.*" The case stands thus. God sees fit to bring forth to view all the perfections of His nature. His first work is that of Creation, in which "the invisible things of him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead." Then follows the work of Providence, which may not improperly be viewed as the continuance of His creative energy, in upholding and controlling all that He has brought into being. Finally, there is Grace, the climax of all His works, in which all His moral affections are disclosed—together with the relations that subsist between the Persons of the Godhead. The nature and power of grace are most fully revealed in dealing with the problem of sin. Of this ruined and lost race of ours, the Father gives to the Son a seed to be redeemed and saved. These are viewed with favor by the Lawgiver only as they are seen in Christ, to whom they are given, and who undertakes on their behalf to render full satisfaction to the law which they have violated. Viewed in themselves, they are under the curse and can only be condemned. But viewed in Christ, who is their Surety, they are contemplated in the light of His work; and thus in Him they are chosen to be sons, being accepted in Him who is the well-beloved of the Father.

What a glory, and what security, is there in God's love of the believer, when it is seen to be not merely an exercise of general benevolence, but a reflection of that special love which from eternity He has cherished to His only begotten Son! "That the love," says the Savior, "wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Hence it is Christ's prerogative to bestow this sonship. For let it be noted here, that the word employed in the text to express the "*power* to become sons," is not that which might easily have been selected, and which signifies *natural* or *physical* energy merely; but is another word, express-

ing the idea of *privilege* grounded upon *right.* This Jesus, in whom we are "predestinated unto the adoption of children," officially confers upon us the moral right to become such: in which, of course, as we shall presently see, is involved the spiritual capacity to fulfil the duties and enjoy the franchises of this high estate.

3. *Christ "gives power to become the sons of God," in removing all the obstacles which hinder the practical accomplishment of this adoption:* and this in a two-fold direction—by *redemption* and by *rescue.*

Allusion has already been made to the first; which, however, requires to be a little extended. As the sinner's substitute, Christ assumes all of his legal obligations—to endure the penalty which he has incurred; and to render the obedience in which he has failed. The law lifts up an impassable barrier to the divine favor, through which grace itself must dig a channel. Its first operation is to satisfy the stern exaction of justice, by giving the life of the substitute for that of the principal. In this death of the one for the other, the legal sanction is fulfilled which says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The sinner's guilt is expiated, the curse is removed, the condemnation is cancelled. Every legal obstruction to the outflow of God's love is taken away, because "there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." We have already seen that, in virtue of this and consistently with holiness and truth, the Father may, by a gracious enactment, adopt us as His children. We are "chosen in Christ"—in whom we are viewed potentially redeemed and saved—"predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." But it is further worthy of notice that, in this work of redemption, Christ has acquired the right to confer this sonship. As the endorser on the sinner's bond, He has transferred to Himself the whole claim which He has graciously liquidated. He has taken up the lien which the law had upon the sinner's life, and holds it as His possession. By the clearest legal title, those whom He has redeemed belong to Him. And if they live henceforth in Him, He is competent in law to "give them power," with Himself, "to become the sons of God."

But the Mediator not only *redeems* His people, He also *rescues* them. In the dire conflict through which He passed with the powers of darkness, He has broken the captivity in which they were held by Satan. The arch seducer, through successful temptation, has tainted us with his own sin. Involved with him in rebellion against God, he had acquired a dominion over us which, though usurped, was none the less real and dreadful. Through sin we had become assimilated to his image; so

that the Savior could say, with such mournful invective, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your Father ye will do." [John viii, 44.] A work of *power* was therefore required at the Mediator's hands, no less than a work of *suffering*. He must bruise the serpent's head. In the great victory He achieved, He overturned the usurper's throne and wrested the sceptre of dominion from his grasp. In this triumph "was proclaimed liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound." [Isaiah lxi, 1.] The relations of the believer to Satan were effectually cancelled—the dreadful features of his paternity were obliterated. The Son has made him free, and that, too, with the freedom of a Son. Thus as a Conqueror, no less than as a Redeemer, the double power vests in the Mediator to confer the privilege of adoption upon those for whom it was both purchased and secured.

4. *As King, Christ gives the Holy Ghost, to make us sons by the new birth.* Adoption among men is a pure fiction. We may be "put among the children," and be treated as though we were sons: but no human power can actually make one a child, who is not such by nature. The blood which courses through the veins, is the blood of a stranger; and the features which he wears, disclose the stamp of another parentage. Intense as may be the affection towards the object of this generous adoption, it differs essentially from that which has its root in the parental instinct. Nature has her own signature which she places upon the relationships of kindred and of blood; and however close the imitation, the counterfeit may always be distinguished from the genuine seal, by analyzing the character of the sentiment which is cherished.

But the discriminating feature of this divine adoption is that we are *actually made* the sons of God. It is no legal fiction, but a most real fact. The text says, with emphasis, He "gives power *to become* the sons of God." The reality of this sonship I have already signalized as grounded in our union with Christ, "the only begotten of the Father." Without repeating, then, this thought, it is enough to indicate the method by which this adoption passes over from a mere act of authoritative legislation into an unquestioned fact of Christian experience. We are made the children of God by a veritable *birth*. Just as, by the birth of the flesh, we are made partakers of the same nature with those who stamp upon us their "image and superscription;" so, by a holy and spiritual birth, "we are made partakers of Christ"—"the members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." Quickened thus into spiritual life and into living union with Him, we become "followers of God as dear children." The connection of this sonship with a divine birth is

too important to be overlooked by the Evangelist in the context: for he immediately describes the method of its accomplishment—"which were BORN, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." With peculiar earnestness, also, our Savior insists upon the necessity of this second and spiritual birth in his conversation with Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be BORN AGAIN, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The agent by whom this is accomplished, I need scarcely remind you, is the Holy Ghost. As His name imports, it is His function, in all the joint operations of the Godhead, to impart life wherever it exists. He is the Spirit—the breath. It was His personal office, in the original creation, to brood over the existing chaos and to impregnate it with the seeds of spiritual life: "and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Under His quickening energy the mighty fermentation began, with the successive separations of the chaotic elements and the emergence of life in all its material forms. From the animalculæ which shoal in a drop of water to the winged seraph who ministers before the sapphire throne in heaven, all life is bestowed by Him whose name is the Quickener. Life corporeal, intellectual, spiritual—all proceed from His almighty energy. Is it strange, then, that in the economy of Grace it should be His office to quicken the soul that is "dead in trespasses and sins," and to make us "new creatures in Christ Jesus?" All that needs to be traced is the dependence of His office upon the work of the Mediator. When the atonement is made, it must be pleaded in the Father's court by the sinner's Advocate. And when the suit has been granted, Christ the King issues the warrant upon which this Quickener conveys the life in the sinner's second birth. Forget not, too, O Christian, that this divine Spirit flutters, like a bird over its brood, over the heart that is now quickened into life; developing all those gracious affections in which it expands and grows, until the dawn of eternal glory. Thus are we *born* into the family of God, by the power of Christ, in the quickening influences of the Holy Ghost which He bestows.

5. *Christ seals this adoption by purchasing the inheritance which, as sons, we possess.* Have you never observed how the blessedness of heaven is heightened to us when represented under the notion of an *inheritance?* Thus, when Paul receives his commission as Apostle to the Gentiles, it is that they may "receive an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith," says Jesus, "that is in me." "In whom," says Paul to the Ephesian Christians, "we also have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all

things after the counsel of his own will." Again, in his epistle to the Colossians, "Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." So the Apostle Peter—"Who hath begotten us to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away' reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." And the climax of testimony is reached in the Savior's benediction at the last day—"Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

It is a principle of our nature that the enjoyment of possession is increased by the sense that it is *our own*. We insensibly spread ourselves over that which we possess, so that it becomes more attractive in the light of our self-love. But of all titles to possession, none is so precious as that of inheritance. What comes to us from our fathers is invested with the purer love which we bore for them. The sweetest memories, the tenderest associations, are wreathed as garlands around that which they once enjoyed, and which comes to us as their legacy of love. It will be the heaven of heaven to us, that it is ours as an inheritance through Christ, who shares it with us. Our title is perfect, because conveyed in these words: "If children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ—if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." He, the only begotten, is the heir of all things—and by mediatorial purchase He, as our Head, is possessor of all things; and He, therefore, is competent to seal our sonship in Him by exalting us to joint-heirship in the inheritance of glory.

In all these particulars, then, Christ "gives power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believe on his name." Who can deny the validity of this claim, or doubt the reality of the privileges which this sonship confers?

In conclusion, my hearers, *note the human condition upon which this adoption is realized.* The double statement in the text makes it a classical passage in reference to *faith:* this power to become the sons of God is given to as many as believe on His name. Faith in the name of Christ is strictly defined as the actual receiving of Christ Himself. And so our own standards describe it: "Faith is a saving grace, whereby we receive the Lord Jesus Christ and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel." A name is that by which we are discriminated from others. It is given us for this purpose, that we may

be individually known. It is the expression, therefore, of our distinct personality, and by which it is revealed. My name is MYSELF; and the two cannot be disjoined.

I remember to have read the story of an Italian nobleman, which affords a striking illustration of this identification of the name with the person. With the infatuation of the gamester, he lost piece by piece his magnificent ancestral estate. Country seat and city palace fell, one by one, under the fatal decision of the die. Stripped at length of all his possessions, he madly staked upon another throw the fair maiden of noble extraction whom he was soon to lead as a bride to the altar. Again fortune was his foe. Goaded to frenzy, the miserable wretch exclaimed, "There is but one thing left, and that is my NAME—a name that stands foremost in Italian history, illustrious for the deeds of honor with which it has been crowned. I throw my name upon the board as my last and only stake." Relentless fate wrenched even this from his grasp. Desperation yielded to despair, settling with midnight gloom upon a soul that had been tossed with the fury of passion. Rushing from the apartment, he wandered over all the earth, a more despairing fugitive than Cain, without a name. It was as though he had been robbed of his soul: he was NOTHING. Meeting in a distant solitude his successful rival, he bent the knee and begged only for his name: "Keep all the rest—lands, houses, even the bride I should have worn upon my breast, but give me back my *name*." At the refusal of this poor boon, he rushed, like a lioness robbed of her whelps, upon his enemy: until, weltering in his own blood, he caught the clotted gore, threw it with a dying curse upon his murderer, and went nameless to the judgment. It may be the invention of pure romance, for aught I know; but it dismally tells what is in a name.

My hearer, Christ's name is Christ Himself. It reveals to you the Mediator, who is the God-man, in all His work of salvation, and in all the offices through which it is accomplished. To *believe* is then just to *receive:* and faith is only the resting of the soul, with all its powers, upon that Jesus who is revealed to you in His name.

What glory, and what security, too, is there in our adoption! Decreed by the Father, acquired and bestowed by the Son, and wrought within us by the Holy Ghost! Christ, in His royal prerogative, stands between the two, giving assurance that the work of grace will be carried forward from the beginning to the end. His royal dignity affords the highest conception of the nobility of rank into which we are introduced as "the sons of God without rebuke."

Sinner, you say it is so hard to believe! Ought it not to be the other way? With such a Savior presented to your view, conveying the offer of such magnificent privileges, how can you help rushing into His arms, saying, "Lord, I believe?" What a heart! what a heart! that can resist it all, to perish in its sin! The Lord in His mercy subdue it, and make you "willing in the day of His power!"

XXXV.

VALUE OF THE SOUL.

MATTHEW xvi, 26:—*"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

The Gospel appeals to every principle by which man can be moved. It addresses itself to the instinct of self-preservation, which is the first law of our nature, and warns us to flee from the wrath to come. But it addresses also man's hopes and man's wishes, which are nearly as strong; and then, with a calmer voice, it speaks to his reason and to his intelligence. It is alleged, I know, that Christianity gains its triumphs by strategy; that it conjures up ghostly fears which break down the firmness of the spirit; and then, in the fright engendered by these apparitions, it insinuates its propositions, against which an unbiased reason would enter a vehement protest. Never was charge more false. The Scriptures present their credentials to the most searching criticism of the most cautious scepticism; and they undertake to show that it is far more reasonable to accept even the darkest mysteries upon the testimony of God, than to reject them upon the presumptions of our finite wisdom. Sometimes it gathers up all appeals in one; addresses itself at once to man's fear, to man's hope, to man's desire, to man's judgment, to man's conscience. Just such an appeal you have in the text; where the world is balanced against the soul, and we are invited to frame a judgment in the comparison of the two. It is an appeal couched in language frightfully solemn; sounding out to us from the depths of the eternal world, as though we were listening to the knell of a lost soul.

But I design, this morning, no appeal to human fear—rather a cool address to human reason. A double calculation is here involved. You are invited to consider the profit which comes to you in the gain of all the world, and then the damage you sustain in the loss of your own soul. In the light of the comparison you find the solution of the momentous problem. Adjust, then, your balances; put the weights now into this scale, and now into that; and see with your own eyes which preponderates.

I. WHAT PROFIT IS THERE IF A MAN GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD? The supposition is large, even to extravagance. Who ever had the whole world? How infinitesimal is the portion assigned to each? But consider, that the world presents itself under a three-fold classification; and in one or the other of these three categories are you to find all that it has—"the lust of the flesh," "the lust of the eye," and "the pride of life." Translated into common speech, these are pleasure with its enticements, ambition with its prizes, and wealth with its rewards. But these three are mutually exclusive of each other, and no man can possess them all. Each must determine for himself which of these three paths shall open to his feet; and when the selection is made, it is with the absolute surrender of the other two. Wealth must be acquired through the abandonment of pleasure, because the two are incompatible. Ambition shall never seize its grand rewards, except through the surrender of wealth. The lover of pleasure must of necessity resign both. And yet, to have all the world, you must overcome this impossibility and possess the three at once.

Now, my hearers, I take you upon the tremendous proposition of the text. Suppose the difficulty swept out of the way; and that, by some magic, you possess all that the world can give of pleasure, all that it can bestow of wealth, all it can confer of ambition. All that God in His providence distributes amongst myriads of competitors, you shall have the power individually to absorb; and you shall have the sublime capacity, which is almost beyond the reach of our conception, of holding it all and of enjoying it all. You shall, by a three-fold expansion, drink in pleasure through all your life, and possess the wealth which the world from its deepest mines can unfold, and wreathe around your brow the laurels of the proudest fame. Yet before you can tell even how much this is worth, you must take three important things into consideration:

1. You must consider *how brief it is in its duration.* Why, even the globe itself will soon be wrapped in flames, and the very space which it occupies shall be vacant; for the Apostle Peter tells us that the "heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Its whole face is covered with briars and thorns, the expression of God's curse even upon the ground. Its surface is scarred with the march of the tornado, or is covered with the lava belched forth by the volcano. Its visage, wherever you turn your eye, bears upon it the signs of the curse which man's sin has brought from the mouth of God

upon it. How can it abide? In the blaze of that holiness which God will disclose in the day of His judgment, this tainted earth must be consumed. If these everlasting mountains shall flow down at the presence of the Judge, and the very sea shall be dried up at His coming, what becomes of all this world awards to you when its very substance is destroyed? But long before that day, death takes you away from the little that you have, and it is lost in the grave. My hearers, I speak not the language of satire—judge ye, if it be not the language of the soberest reason—when I say that, if you confine your view within the horizon which bounds the earth, and take in none of the relations which lie beyond, this life and this world are both a solemn mockery. In the midst of what you have, your very enjoyment withers under the sarcasm which curls its lip and points to these blessings as a satire upon human weakness and folly. Why the larger the possessions, the greater the demonstration of the vanity. Think! only three score years and ten. Mark them out upon the dial plate of eternity, and they do not pass even for seconds of the minutes that make up one hour of that boundless duration. Only three score years and ten; and one-third of these consumed in growth, the getting ready to live and to acquire; and the second third exhausted in the toil which scrapes together a few of the glittering sands that you call property; and only the poor last third left to any of you, securely to hold and to enjoy. In the very holding and enjoying, there creep upon you the infirmities of age, loosening, by a gradual paralysis, the clasp of your fingers—until remorseless death comes at the end and opens the hand, and you and your possessions are swallowed up in the womb of the earth.

My hearers, you are merchants, the most of you; accustomed to balancing books; doing it every year, every week, perhaps every day, estimating your gains against your losses, finding out, according to the language of the world, how much you are worth—as though silver piled up to the stars could tell what a man is worth, who has a soul! I ask you whether it be anything but the supremest folly, to make your investments in what perishes so soon? Perhaps you have looked on a gorgeous sunset on a summer eve. You have seen the splendid cloud presenting what appears to the eye a cloth of crimson, with its edge bordered as with burnished gold. Could anything be more beautiful than that cloud, as it is drenched in the glory of the setting sun? Did it ever occur to any of you, as you gazed upon the magnificent spectacle, whether you would purchase it? Go down into your chests and bring up your treasures, and buy that cloud and make it your possession. Alas!

in the very seconds in which you are making the calculation what it may be worth, it disappears and nothing is left but the thin air upon which it was woven. Yet that fainting shadow is more substantial than what you pursue, when you undertake to make this world your portion separate from the interests of the soul and the claims of God. I am done with that thought. You see the length of the duration. Is it worth any sensible man's while to make the investment of all that his soul is worth in what is as empty and as transient as the fleecy and the fleeting cloud?

2. But consider a second thing: *how utterly unsatisfactory those possessions are while they last.* All human experience attests this. Pleasures pall at the very height of enjoyment, and the voluptuary must seek repose before it can be renewed. Honors satiate, and we are sick at heart even amid the applauses of the multitude. Dominion is unutterably monotonous. The wider the sweep of power and the more despotic the control, only the more complete is the isolation and the more desolate the loneliness. The greatest conqueror, the man who has achieved the highest fame, sits at last like the sparrow upon the house-top, without companionship even in his glory. There are two principles which control this. The first is, that the soul expands through the efforts which it puts forth, and outgrows its possessions. Wonderful characteristic of spirit—growth! Every thought, every desire, every effort, every volition of the will, every operation of judgment, every exercise of every faculty, goes back into the spirit as an increment of its strength: just like the food received in infancy and youth—which, assimilating to the frame, strengthens it and carries it to maturity. But when, in all the vast future that opens before you in the unfoldings of eternity, does spirit ever reach the bound where growth is arrested? And so, by this characteristic law, man, in the simple exercise of his power, outgrows the earth. There is not a human soul in which, if you were to put the solid globe with all that is on it, it will not rattle there as idly as a single bead in a child's toy. If man, in the efforts which he is continually putting forth, grows beyond the reach of that which he enjoys, there can be no permanent satisfaction in anything purely earthly.

And then the second principle: that God has ordained all earthly things to be enjoyed only as a means to an end, subordinated to His glory who is supreme. My hearers, which existed first, matter or spirit? Away back in the silence of far off eternity, what lived—matter or God? The uncreated, eternal, unchangeable Spirit who filled all immensity

with His presence and, by the word of His power, created innumerable worlds—this God who, as a pure Spirit, first subsisted, tells us that when He created man with his body out of the dust of the earth, He breathed into him a living soul; and thus he became God's son, made "after his image and in his likeness." Now, unless you deny the existence of spirit in man, I desire to know by what relationship can this immortal substance, which is like God, ever find its satisfying portion in material gratification of any sort? No, it was originally designed as a means to an end; and he misses the great secret of earthly enjoyment, who converts the means into an end, and seeks the world for the world's own sake. The instant you destroy the subordination which God Himself has appointed, and make this world, in any of its three-fold forms, an end which you pursue for itself, you have dissipated its charm and lodged within you the certainty of a most bitter disappointment. Even during its brief continuance, neither pleasure nor wealth nor fame can give to you the satisfaction you desire. The fact is, the pleasure is found in the acquisition, in the simple activity which is put forth in the getting, and in the illusive hope of the enjoyment which is to come from the possession. But when the labor and the hope are realized, alas! it is like the child's soap bubble, painted with all the colors of the rainbow and collapsing as soon as it rises above his head. The glittering bubble bursts in your hand, and you find it to be emptiness itself. Is it worth your while to make an investment in that which brings you no satisfaction even when you have it, to say nothing of the brief period in which you will be permitted to enjoy it?

3. *Wordly possessions, sought and acquired separate from God, nourish sentiments and passions fatal to happiness, and in themselves the sources of torture.* Wealth pursued for itself alone, breeds avarice; and avarice is selfishness. Honor sought for itself, and not as a means to a higher end, nourishes pride; and that is selfishness. Pleasure, made a business, engenders that levity which is but selfishness in another form and unspeakably the most contemptible. Pursuing the world in either of its grand divisions, man makes himself his own end, and becomes the centre around which everything else revolves; and selfishness is his characteristic law. Now, my hearers, will it stagger you to be told that, according to the constitution which God gave to man in the beginning, selfishness is simply *unnatural?* He that lives merely for self aggrandizement or for self-appreciation, lives against the rule of his original being. It is the law of creatureship that it shall never be self-poised. Only God is. The earth and the sun and the stars are balanced upon

His word. Only He, the infinite and the supreme, has the ground of His existence within Himself. All created things lean upon the arm of His strength; and no being, be he angel in heaven or man upon the earth, however exalted in intelligence or in power, can ever be self-contained. Yet the man who seeks to invest all his interests in the world, though he should possess the whole of it, in developing this principle of selfishness, is seeking to poise himself upon nothing. He, then, who pursues the world with these selfish ends, nourishes a principle which is destructive of his happiness. There can be no rest to any created thing except upon its support. And if all created things are designed to lean upon the arm of God, until we use everything as a means to His glory no true satisfaction can be found. We only nourish a sentiment within us which is to be the source of endless torment.

So much, then, for the one scale. I have given you, in the supposition of the text, the whole world in all the forms in which that world distributes itself; and you have put it in the scale with these considerations along with it—that you shall have it but a short time, that it cannot satisfy you while it lasts, and that it nourishes within you principles that are destructive of true happiness. You see the profit in the gain of the whole world. Now put the weights into the other scale and estimate, if you can, the loss of a single soul. Brethren, it surpasses all human calculation. There are no data of sense by which we can know the value of the soul. I must speak with self-restraint in reference to it; but let me suggest just two or three things which may help us to some appreciation of what is involved in its loss.

1. There is, for example, *the entire privation of all that the soul can hold dear.* After death what becomes of wealth? Your houses that you have built, and your lands that you have called after your own name, your heavy investments in this form or in that—what become of them when grim death, with his skeleton fingers controlling yours, has compelled you to write the legacy by which they are bequeathed to your heir? Honors! what are they worth to you, when death has breathed upon those laurels and withered every flower? And how the froth of earthly enjoyment has subsided when all the senses, through which that pleasure streamed, are locked up in the sleep of the grave. Only the dark memory of all this will survive, a phantom which can never more be grasped. True, it gave no solid satisfaction whilst you had it, and you were obliged all the way through to mourn over your disappointment. But such as it was on earth, it was all that you had; and you

made the best of it. Now, it is all dissipated into air, and you in eternity have nothing. The wealth is vanished, the pleasures are blasted, the honors are destroyed.

Even this is not the worst In that world into which a lost soul goes, there is nothing but privation under its new conditions and in its new surroundings. It is the world of loss, where there is nothing; and the man is sensible simply of absolute deprivation. Remember that the soul never dies. Whether saved or lost, because it is soul, it carries with it all its powers. Think of this soul, in the eternal world, cut off from every object congenial to it. There will be mind, even with the lost; but no truth. The grand fact is, that all truth in eternity will be theology; and the lost soul, because it hates God, will recoil from the truth which it finds in God. There shall be no power to assimilate this truth, so that the mind shall be satisfied and fed. Do none of you in this assembly know the mental torture in the struggle to get at truth, when it is beyond your grasp and you are remanded to the agony of donbt? You have in this the faintest possible picture of a lost intellect, flung out by the power of God into the loneliness of the boundless eternity; searching everywhere, and seeing truth without the power to grasp it, to assimilate it, to enjoy it. Just as the light which streams in upon the diseased eye, fills that eye as it were with a thousand needles: so shall the light of divine truth, as it beams from the person and from the throne of God, fill with inexpressible torture this lost intellect in eternity.

There will be, too, nothing of the beautiful to gratify the taste and sensibility. God fills eternity. All things there are seen in their relation to God. The awful schism which man created, in this world, between God and nature—that chasm which men seek to throw in between philosophy and science here, and the God who is the producer of all that makes science and philosophy—disappears forever in the eternal world. Not only shall there be truth only as seen in God, but there shall be beauty only as it is reflected from Him. It is the *divine* beauty that fills eternity with its glory and blessedness; and man, by reason of his own deformity, will recoil from it, and will feel his sensibilities and his tastes a source of torture to him.

What shall I say of the will—that power within us which is at the foundation of all activity, the root of all human energy, by which every movement of every muscle is controlled, by which all the operations of intelligence and thought are directed, by which all the currents of the affections are controlled—that will which postulates, in its very activity, our resemblance to the God in whose image we have been formed? Oh!

my hearers, the doom of a lost will! of a will that, by its very law, must always operate; and yet a will which, in all its actings, only recoils upon itself!

Perhaps these reflections do not impress many of you as they do myself. I confess to you that the condition of a lost soul appears to me unutterably dreadful, in this eternal crushing down of all the movements of a man's nature. So that, by the very necessity of his spirit, he shall be always in the forth-putting of power, only to have that very power recoil upon himself, and with its momentum carry him deeper and deeper into the pit of despair. Oh! that in hell there could be annihilation! Oh! that God would put forth His omnipotence and blot out the soul! But that He should cast the soul out in the dark, feeling in all directions with the energy of despair, yet achieving nothing! Nothing congenial within, nothing congenial without, its only experience is the sense of loss forever!

2. *Consider the vast extension of misery to the lost in the expansion of their powers.* The mind enlarging in its very effort to reject God's truth; the affections growing, but only the more to recoil from God—every principle that belongs to man as a spiritual being not only subsists but expands forever. There will be an eternally increasing capacity for suffering; and so the area of misery will be enlarged by the use of those very powers which we are compelled to exercise. The dismal prospect held out to the lost soul, is the increase of its pain. Hell, if it be a reality at all, is only banishment, isolation, joylessness, restlessness, unrest, forever and forever. And the misery of this will deepen in the spirit, as the sense of its loss increases in the fresh experience of banishment from God's presence and from the glory of His power.

3. I speak only of one thing more, and that is *the actual pressure of God's judicial displeasure.* I have no power to expound this, and no desire. From the teachings of Scripture, it must be a peculiar element of the misery of the lost, that they are under a present and most distressing sense of God's judicial anger. Here is a wretch who has perpetrated some dark offence against society, and he is haunted by the memory of his crime by day and by night; the ghost is all the time peering in upon him, and filling his soul with inconceivable remorse That is one form of distress, bad enough to bear. But I fancy, when that man's crime has been discovered, when he is arraigned before the tribunal of human justice, when he is obliged to hear the fearful indictment against him, when the decision of the law is pronounced in the solemn and authoritative tones of the judge, and the man goes forth to

his prison or to the scaffold under the reprobation of society, the whole moral sentiment of his kind organized and pronounced in formal legal judgment upon his crime, and he bears upon his soul the weight of all that shame, there has been added a special element to the distress before experienced. Just so the Scriptures speak of the lost as "waking to shame and to everlasting contempt." This is what is termed in the Bible, with such holy irony, "the promotion of fools." God, through His prophet, in language so terrific that one almost trembles to repeat it, speaks of the scorn with which He will greet the sinner, as He pronounces upon him the sentence of attainder and banishment: "Because I have called, and ye refused: I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." Great God! to be forever under that ban! To have the moral sentiment of God's great universe gathered up into the decree which is pronounced from the throne, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels!" To be forever under the scorn and contempt of the pure and holy, as they occupy their places in God's kingdom above! To have the mercy and compassion of God turned away from us; and our distressful cries, poured forth from aching hearts, receiving only this rejoinder: "I called, ye refused; now ye shall call, and I will not answer!" The woe of hell shall find in the joys of heaven the most solemn and terrific mockery which can be poured upon it.

I say nothing of the positive pains and penalities which a God of infinite justice shall add to all this; and which, perhaps, may be indicated in those figures which you find in the Scriptures, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," and "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." But just to have such a nature as ours, with those gigantic powers which we are compelled to recognize, at least in their germ; and then to feel that we may be banished far away in that lonely eternity, where we can see God only to have the misery increased by the contemplation of His glory—and evermore to be pressed down under a sense of despair, and to feel that it is hopeless, hopeless, forever and forever! Sometimes men reach a point in this life when the principle of hope is broken within them, and all elasticity is destroyed, and they drag their weary forms along through a future which is as dark and dreary as the darkness of Egypt itself. And to think of spending an eternity under the pressure of that hopelessness; as God shall "render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil!"

My hearers, here are the scales. You have put the world in one, you have put the soul in the other; you have seen the gain in the one, the the loss in the other. I ask you to make a choice, and I pray you that it be a wise choice. All the elements of the decision are in your hands. It is perfectly competent for you, in the exercise of a calm judgment, to decide where your interests lie; whether to make your investments in this world, or to lay up your treasures in heaven "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." It may not be too late even for the most hardened of those in this house to choose the good part which shall not be taken away from them. I must assume, by your presence here, that you are still the "prisoners of hope;" and I must therefore exhort you to "flee to the strongholds." Enter into the ark, before the winds blow and the rains fall and you are overtaken by the coming deluge. But neither you nor I can tell how soon it may be too late; nor at what moment the finger of destiny may point to the termination of God's patience, and the end of your trial here upon the earth. By the uncertainty of this life and the certainty of the judgment that follows, I implore you, before it be too late, to choose; and to make the choice which shall be your joy throughout eternity. I once heard from the lips of a venerable minister how he was called to the bedside of a sick man, and when he undertook to speak about the soul and the preparation for death, he was sternly arrested by the uncompromising infidel saying, "Sir, I welcome you if you appear in my chamber as a friend; but if you come to me as a minister of the Gospel, to speak to me of the soul and eternity, I forbid your presence." The man of God was baffled for an instant, and then he bravely gathered up his thought and made this reply: "Sir, there is no place on this earth where I can cease to be a minister of God, or forbear, as His messenger, to utter the calls of mercy to a lost sinner; and if I cannot come into your chamber as a minister, to point to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, I cannot come at all; I must be true to God, and I must be true to you." After a few months, in a city which was distant from their common home, he received an urgent message to come where the dying infidel lay; and as he entered the thin voice shrieked out, "Too late! too late!! too late!!! I am lost forever!"—the first note of that wild despair whose wailings roll their ceaseless echoes in the pit below.

XXXVI.

THE ANTIDOTE OF CARE.

PHILIPPIANS iv, 6:—"*Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*"

No one lives without the experience of care. The different relations we sustain in this world are all crowded with their respective duties, which impose corresponding obligations: and the mere sense of responsibility arising from these, without any accessories, is a sufficient source of anxiety. When to this is added that imperfect control over the persons or events with which each is connected, it is not surprising that the shoulders of so many stoop under the burdens they have neither strength to cast off, nor fortitude to bear. The schemes formed with the wisest forecast are suddenly thwarted by influences which were never anticipated, and issue in disappointment and sorrow: so that, with Solomon, we "look on all the works that our hands have wrought, and on the labor that we have labored to do, and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and there is no profit under the sun." Hence, moralists of every age have found it a fruitful theme of discourse, either to lift men above the sense of care, or else to reconcile them to the thorns which must always vex their repose. In so far as they have appealed to the natural resources of the human will, or have drawn their arguments from this world alone, they have signally failed. No considerations of the shortness of life, nor of the unavoidable necessity of these cares, have materially lightened their pressure so long as they are left. Unfortunately, too, only here and there an athletic spirit gathers strength, like the fabled Antæus, from such contact with earth, and achieves the stoicism which is so much desired: while weaker natures shrink away under the bondage of evils from which this proud philosophy finds for them no redemption. And though it should be universally attained, it remains a question whether the stony hardness imparted to the character will prove a compensation for the ulceration of the heart it was intended to relieve.

It is worthy of your notice how far the ethical teachings of the Bible transcend those of the noblest earthly schools. The doctrines of Grace, always presupposed even when not professedly expounded, underlie their moral instructions, just as the solid ribs of stone support the outer crust of earth. Hence, they never amuse the care-worn believer with delusive counsel; which, however charming to the ear, is always "broken to the hope." They point him at once to "the hills whence his help cometh"—and to the patient imitation of One who bowed His soul unto death, in submissive endurance of His Father's will: "who, though he were a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered." They teach that "the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the coming of Jesus Christ." In the text, for example, the inspired oracle gives, in a single word, a perfect antidote to all care—a word more fruitful of peace than all the apophthegms which human wisdom has strung together upon its ethical pages, like the beads of a rosary: "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." "Is any among you afflicted, let him pray." The exhortation, you perceive, is unqualified: "Be careful"—that is, be solicitous or full of care—"for nothing; but in everything let your requests be made known unto God." The counsel is not tendered in the doubtful and measured tone of one not fully assured of the efficacy of his specific. It will meet every case Whatever be the pressure of care, or the severity of affliction, the true and only remedy is found at the mercy-seat. I propose, then, to consider the subject of prayer, in this particular relation to worldly perplexities and trials; and to show its magic influence in dissipating the cares which swarm upon the soul with their offensive and corroding touch.

1. *In prayer we are brought to an habitual and practical sense of the supreme will of a personal God.* When we have made a last analysis of the cares which annoy us, they are found to have their root in a conviction, more or less intense, of individual responsibility. The judge on the bench, the professional man in his office, the merchant on change, the parent among his children, the mistress in her household—all feel themselves girded with weighty and irremissible trusts. The more these are pondered, the heavier grows the pressure of responsibility upon the spirit: until, not unfrequently, a feverish anxiety is engendered, which leads to distempered and gloomy views of life—and by exhausting the resolution, disqualifies from the healthful and patient discharge of duty.

It is a special aggravation in those cases where the refractory will of those under our control refuses to bend to our authority. The painful alternative then presents itself, of abandoning the line of duty which conscience recognizes, or of entering upon an obstinate struggle for the ascendancy. So, too, when events continually happen which the utmost prudence could not foresee, and too stubborn to be worked into the plans which have already been formed. When keenly alive to the responsibility of their positions in life, few spirits but are sorely chafed to feel that they cannot be disrobed of it, and yet to find themselves constantly defeated by the spirit of insubordination which will not brook restraint —or else thwarted by new occurrences throwing up a front of resistance across their path.

It is obvious that these anxieties would instantly be terminated by complete exemption from responsibility in the cases supposed. If in no degree we are answerable for the results, no reason exists for irritation of spirit. That petulance which arises from the mere crossing of one's will, where no duties are imposed and no responsibility accrues, meets with no sympathy from God's Word; and as the sigh of an imperious and haughty temper, it is severely chastised at the hands of moralists. Whatever, therefore, shall tend to lighten this responsibility, will equally abridge these cares. For this reason, whenever, by association with others, responsibility can be divided, there is a sensible mitigation of solicitude. The parent who is not alone in the guidance of the household, and the merchant who can summon to his aid a partner equally implicated in all the transactions of business, find as much relief from these joint counsels as they do assistance from the division of labor. Thus, "two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor; for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up." It is precisely in this aspect I would have you first regard prayer, in its relation to the various annoyances of life. It brings us face to face with a personal God, whose supreme will we must trace in all the events of our history: and upon whom, if conscious of fidelity to His commands, we can cast, to a large degree, the responsibilities which otherwise must crush us with their weight.

Prayer is vastly more than the passionate outburst of imprisoned feeling, like the spurting of blood under the compression of a bandage. It is more than bald apostrophe to a lawless power which rushes on its pathway with the majesty of the hurricane, or with the impetuosity of an avalanche. It is the intelligent offering of our desires to a Being

who can be moved by our entreaties. Prayer is nothing, if it does not practically apprehend God in the distinctness of His personality. Undiscovered to sense, He is clearly revealed to faith; which approaches His throne and touches the sceptre which sways the destinies of the universe. Whether it articulates itself in forms of speech, or is embodied in those unutterable groanings which only He who knows the mind of the Spirit is able to translate, it equally recognizes God as present, with intelligence to know and with will to relieve. Wholly independent of the artificial symbols necessary to human intercourse, it is a communion more intimate than any which man holds with his fellow upon earth. The Christian feels that his supplications enter into the ears of a present God; whilst the promises, opened to his faith, become the living voice of Jehovah in reply. Nor is this recognition of the divine personality that meagre speculative assent which may be learned by rote from the stereotyped phrases of a scientific creed. It is an abiding and practical sense of it in the soul, making the Christian life to beat with a quicker pulse, and giving complexion to all the thoughts and duties of the man. Such a sense of the living God will lead us to bow with sacred deference to the supremacy of His will. God's agency is seen as clearly in the fall of a sparrow as in the creation of a planet, in the rustling of a leaf as in the crash of an empire. His supremacy is felt to transcend immeasurably the feeble dominion which the proudest earthly despot wields within the circle of his power. It is not a supremacy over the person and fortune alone, but over the mind and temper and heart.

See now the bearing of this upon the subject we are considering. The man of prayer comes down from the mount where, like Moses, he has talked face to face with God. He surveys the lot which Providence has assigned for his inherituance in life. It may be one of perplexity and toil, still it is the lot of God's chcosing. Within his dwelling all the cares of life may hive, like swarms of bees; still they light not by chance, but come at the bidding of Him "who maketh his angels, spirits, and his ministers, a flame of fire." If untoward events thwart his fondest counsels, they are still threads woven into the web of divine providence, which all have a purpose and an aim. He is then not wholly responsible for the trials of his earthly condition, but may share these with Him whom none may dare to challenge. He is only responsible for his demeanor, for his humble submission to God's will, and for patient continuance in well-doing to the end. As for all the rest, he may cast his care upon One who careth for him. The peevish com-

plaints of men, in respect to the cares of this world, surely proceed from want of consideration and of faith. If they would but pray and hold personal communion with God, they would learn that all these come by the appointment of a will they would not desire to resist. They would know that, if faithful to His service, they are accepted as surely in defeat as in success: and this reliance upon God's supremacy would afford precisely that support on which the dependent spirit of a creature craves to lean. In the lightening of this sense of responsibility, the axe is laid on the root of all anxiety. There are some forms of bereavement which no argument can reach, but that derived from the divine sovereignty. The stricken heart can only "be still, and know that he is God." "I was dumb," says the Psalmist, "I opened not my mouth, because THOU didst it." "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother." The argument is just as cogent for our trials as for our sorrows:

"It is the Lord: should I distrust
Or contradict His will,
Who cannot do but what is just
And must be righteous still?"

2. *Prayer leads to the contemplation of God's covenant relations with us, which will soften the lot otherwise rugged and difficult.* If a reflecting mind should be suddenly aroused to the necessity and privilege of prayer, without a single ray of previous instruction, several questions of vast importance would immediately be suggested. Will this infinite Being condescend to listen to our requests? How shall we find God, and by what avenue approach His awful presence? Who will present us before the throne, and become our interpreter in that august court? How shall the vileness of our sins be covered from the sight of God's consuming holiness? By what title shall the divine majesty be addressed? Are any limitations placed upon our desires, or may we present every vagrant wish that finds a lodgment in the breast? And upon what warrant may we expect a determinate answer to our petitions? To all these questions the Scripture returns a precise answer, the sense of whose importance may perhaps be blunted by a too familiar acquaintance: and it may require an effort to throw ourselves into the position of such an inquirer, and to feel the agitation of his spirit till these difficulties are resolved. Still we can see that the exercise of prayer will depend upon the answers given: otherwise all access to a throne of grace is barred.

The Bible, however, contains a written charter which secures to the Christian all the immunities and privileges he enjoys: "This is the

covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord—I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." By this covenant the way of approach is opened through Christ by one Spirit unto the Father. An advocate and interpreter is found in "the great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God;" so that we may "come boldly unto the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." An effectual plea is furnished; which may be urged in perfect assurance that whatsoever we ask of the Father in the name of the Son, He will give it unto us. Nay, the very petitions which spring from our lips are indited by the indwelling Spirit, who "helpeth our infirmities, teaching what we should pray for as we ought." The promises of this covenant, as they constitute the warrant, so they contain the very material of true prayer. They teach that certain blessings may be asked of God with an absolute expectation of their being granted, because known antecedently to be in accordance with "the good pleasure of his will"—as when we pray for acceptance through Christ and for increase of holiness. Certain other things, however, may be objects of desire, but can only be properly made the subjects of prayer under conditions mentally recognized, if not verbally enunciated by the petitioner; as when we pray for recovery from sickness, or for the increase of worldly possessions. These particular things are nowhere in the covenant the subject of a specific promise: and if our prayers embrace them, it must be with a reservation in favor of God's sovereignty to which we are pledged to bow with docility and cheerfulness. Thus the divine covenant, which opens the way and secures the answer of prayer, also regulates its exercise; so that it is not a lawless wishing, but the intelligent "offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to his will." It is thus plain that the Christian idea of prayer goes far beyond that inculcated by natural religion. The latter would construe it only as the language of the creature's dependence upon the resources of an almighty creator and benefactor. But if the question be asked, how shall a *sinner* approach the awful holiness of God, and hold the communion with Him which is implied in prayer—it is *grace* only that can answer, by pointing to the mediation of Jesus Christ and to the co-operation of the Holy Ghost. If it be asked again, what shall be the subject-matter of our petitions, the answer is, those things which grace makes over in the promises as the inheritance of God's children. Prayer, therefore, must contemplate the covenant as the only charter under which the sinner can hold any

privileges or claim any rights: and it must regard God, not merely in the natural relations of Creator, Preserver and Benefactor, but in the gracious relations which He sustains, by promise and by oath, of Father, Redeemer and Portion.

It requires but a word to trace the influence of these views upon the perplexities and sorrows of life. Be it so, that the believer's lot is one of continued vexation and solicitude, his will contradicted and his purposes defeated at every point. His reverential study of the covenant assures him that these allotments are not inconsistent with God's fatherly love, and form no evidence against his personal acceptance in Christ. On the contrary, if this life be a state of gracious discipline, he may expect his patience of hope, his cheerfulness of submission, his trustfulness of faith, to be tested by every variety of trial which earth can afford. If through infinite mercy his spirit is adorned with gracious dispositions, all the analogies of nature and providence will teach him that these can grow to maturity only by exercise attended with pain and toil. If the unspeakable joys of heaven are hereafter to be possessed in the way of reward, the cares and sorrows of life are necessary for manifesting those traits of fidelity and constancy which will receive the applause of the last day. If, moreover, it is one of the dignities conferred upon him to be anointed as a witness for God, how shall the riches of divine grace be revealed through him as "a living epistle," unless he is placed in situations beyond the power of nature to endure with equanimity and cheerfulness? And last of all, when his fortitude is about to yield under accumulated trials, the covenant directs him to the source of supernatural strength. The assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee," moves him to present and future endurance. Thus, a mellow light, issuing from the covenant of grace, throws a softer hue upon these darkened scenes. Just as from a lofty elevation the rugged objects left below shade off into harmonious parts of a lovely landscape so from the mount of prayer our perplexities are viewed through an atmosphere of grace, which soften their deformities into the features of a wise and well-appointed plan.

3. *Prayer compels us to take an inventory of our mercies, and to balance them against our trials.* In the text, the Apostle uses three terms to indicate the nature of true prayer: "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." This aggregation of descriptive terms is common in the New Testament, wherever this topic is discussed; as in Ephesians vi, 18, "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit;" and

in I Timothy ii, 1, "I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men." This reduplication of language should not be charged with tautology, even though we should not be able to attach a different sense to each expression; since the fulness and vehemence of prayer are thereby implied But I suppose a difference of signification may easily be traced. The first term, "prayer," is the most general, importing the wish presented to God for good things to be obtained. The second term, "supplication," refers to deprecatory petitions extorted from us by the pressure of evils, either already experienced or anticipated with dread. But I am now more particularly concerned with the third and last. It is not without emphasis that Paul here enumerates "thanksgiving" as an element of true prayer; since prominently in this is found the antidote of care which he so earnestly recommends.

Few things conduce more to contentment than the habit of contrasting our circumstances with those of others less favored in providence. While we sit brooding over our own trials, it is easy to fancy our lot peculiarly hard, until the festering discontent shall ripen into habitual peevishness. But the sight of other men's distresses will often dissipate the sore, before it gathers into an imposthume. Let the mistress of a well-appointed household, for example, whose soul is vexed with the cares incident to its control, visit a poor widow broken in spirit, oppressed with bodily suffering, stitching by a flickering lamp—while, in imagination, she divides her gains between a black loaf for her hungry babes and the arrearage of rent which threatens to thrust her from a comfortless attic into the drains and gutters of the city: and she will return grateful for the house which before it vexed her to keep, and for the domestics whom it was a trial to manage. Or, let the merchant, who frets angrily over the accounts of delinquent debtors staring out from the columns of his fat ledger, visit a brother suddenly overtaken with bankruptcy—his credit prostrate, his honor tainted, even hope itself crushed out under the weight of irretrievable insolvency: he will turn with another heart to that long array of figures, thankful that he at least can strike a balance between his credits and debits. Or, let the anxious father, weary of the conflict with the hardy wills which he must restrain, enter the gloomy cell of a prison, through whose grated window streams just light enough to disclose the gray hairs of a more unfortunate parent bowing with shame and agony over the fetters of a profligate son: and he will turn with stronger resolution to the weary task of paternal discipline.

These illustrations, you will admit, are tableaux of real life, and they are sufficient for my purpose. But prayer exerts the same wholesome influence by forcing us to perceive the contrasts in our individual life. It is difficult to conceive of a full prayer of which thanksgiving shall not be a part. The very habit of referring to infinite goodness as the source from which blessings are to be drawn, and to infinite power by which anticipated ills are to be averted, will call up the remembrance of mercies already enjoyed. The petitioner will naturally seek for precedents in his own history, for the confirmation of his hope. He will remember former emergencies, in which he cried unto the Lord and was delivered. In the seventh trouble, he will not forget the six which preceded. The deep gratitude of his soul will pour forth in praise and song. The sense of those mercies, none the less precious because the most common, will now be lively and fresh. He will bless God for the air he breathes, for the light he sees, for the health he enjoys, for the food he eats, for the raiment he wears, for the reason he exercises, for the sweets of domestic and social life, and for the thousand pleasures which approach him by a thousand different avenues. At length the swelling list overwhelms with its magnitude; and he bows before "the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift," whose "mercies are new every morning and renewed every evening." Tell me now if, in the sight of God's unnumbered favors, the seal of silence will not be placed upon every complaint, and if each repining thought will not be led captive in the train of victorious and triumphant gratitude? If, then, in prayer we are compelled thus to survey the goodness of the Lord, we must needs be quiet under the discipline of care, and patiently endure those "thorns in the flesh," the "messengers of Satan to buffet us, lest we should be exalted above measure."

4. *Prayer imparts a tone to the spirit, girding it for the hour of trial.* Have you never found relief under the burdens of life through communion with some more heroic spirit, which insensibly restored the elasticity which had begun to be weakened? He may not utter a word of sympathy, may even be ignorant of your secret trouble. Yet as he discourses upon the nobler themes which interest himself, you are quietly drawn up to his level, and breathe a more bracing atmosphere. Introduced to a wider range of thought, you are mortified at the narrow circle of your own views, and blush at the feebleness of your own will. You at once perceive that life has other elements than the petty cares which had absorbed your attention. The diversion of your mind to these, causes the others to shrink back into their native littleness: and the

emancipated spirit comes forth to look at, and to work out, the higher mission to which it is now exalted. All this is but the influence which mind naturally exerts upon mind: for "as iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." But prayer is the loftiest of all intercourse, by so much as God is the loftiest of all beings. The awe inspired by a sense of the divine majesty and holiness takes complete possession of the soul, swaying all its faculties. This is by a law similar in its operation, only infinitely higher in degree, to that mysterious ascendancy gained by superior natures over those of weaker mould; when by an unaccountable fascination all their powers are held as by a spell, whose control is irresistible like that of fate.

This, however, would be a low view in which to rest. The believer's communion with God, and his reception of strength, turn upon far higher principles than those of mere nature. By virtue of his union with Christ, there is a real communication of life and power from Him "in whom" to this end "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." For this purpose, the Holy Ghost is sent to abide with him forever. As the Spirit of Christ, He applies the grace which is treasured in Christ; communicating light in seasons of darkness, and strength in hours of weakness. He dwells within the Christian, exerting His power upon every faculty alike. This is clearly implied by the Apostle in the verse succeeding the text: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your minds and hearts through Christ Jesus." The expression, "*shall keep*," is in the original a military metaphor—"shall *garrison* your minds." There is, therefore, an influence of the Holy Ghost upon the *understanding* of the Christian, fortifying it against the cavils which the seeming inequalities of divine providence so often suggest; upon the *affections*, guarding them against the seductions of the world, and holding them fast in their loyalty to God; upon the *will*, strengthening it to firmer resistance in the time of strong temptation. By this immediate influence of the Holy Ghost in the dispensation of grace, the permanent condition of the believer is one of security and peace; and this habitual serenity and composure of soul is itself a protection against the invasions of care and sorrow "Be careful for nothing," such is Paul's argument—"only let your requests be made known unto God:" and, as the result, "the peace of God will keep your minds and hearts" with all the security of a garrison.

This general and constant influence of prayer upon the character is perhaps too much overlooked, even by Christians. We are prone to estimate the value of prayer only by the particular blessings it is the

means of obtaining. That heroic tone of the spirit which is imparted by habitual communion with God, that tension of all the faculties secured by the direct influence of the Holy Ghost, are appreciated with more difficulty, and often are undervalued until the attention is drawn to it. And yet upon this previous fortification of the soul largely depends our safety in temptation and trouble. In the first access of these, there is not composure enough to elaborate the principles upon which we fall back for support. They must be at hand and ready for use, as the surprised soldier can do nothing more than unsling and present to the enemy his weapons of war already burnished and charged. "Prayer keeps the Christian's armor bright." His courage will be the greater if he is ready for the onset, with his mind strung and his spirit calm. All experience testifies that the Christian never yields under any pressure of sin or care, save as he loses tone of spirit; which can only be maintained by earnest and habitual prayer, continually fixing him at the throne of power and of grace.

5. Nearly allied to this is another influence of true prayer; which, though scarcely separated by a logical difference, I prefer to throw under a special head. I refer to *the effect of prayer in bringing us to a determinate issue with ourselves.* How often it happens that men bear with exemplary cheerfulness the heavy calamities of life, and yet betray the most unseemly peevishness under the petty annoyances of the passing hour. The reason is, God's hand is seen in the one and not in the other. The death of a friend, or the sudden loss of fortune, is recognized at once as coming by divine appointment. But our cares are of the earth, earthly. We do not trace the connection between the waywardness of children, the indolence of servants, the delinquences of neighbors, and the disciplinary providence of God. There is another reason. Calamities present to us a single front. Each towers before us in its isolate grandeur and bleakness: and all the resources of nature and of grace are summoned to our aid. The whole soul is gathered up to meet the trial; all the strength and resolution we possess are marshalled; it is not the time to allow discord and schism between the faculties of our nature. If for a moment the water-spout bursts over us and buries us many fathoms deep, by a natural buoyancy we rise to the surface again; and by self-recollection and prayer, the whole man is united in the resolution to endure. Our cares, on the other hand, come upon us in detail. They swarm about us like bees. They cover every inch of surface upon us. Their poisoned sting is felt at a thousand points at once: until, maddened with vexation, we fume and stamp and fret, only to aggravate

the petty enemies which bury their stings within us with tenfold greater fury. Like the foolish sheep in a thicket, we lacerate our flesh with the thorns, which would be powerless to harm if we would only be still and "possess our souls in patience."

Should any of you come to me for counsel under the burden of your anxieties, I would probably address you in terms like the following: Are not these cares incident to the relations you sustain in life, and did not God bind them up together? Did you not yourselves select these relations, with the foreknowledge of their attendant cares? Would you even now consent to drop those, in order to be quiet of these? If a parent, would you be willing to be deprived of your children to be rid of their trouble? If a merchant to lose your business to escape its perplexities? If a householder, to be without a house to avoid its vexations? If not, then by a new election of your will you choose to be in the situation in which you are found. What, then, do you propose? What indeed remains, but to nerve yourself for the endurance of all that is annoying in your sphere? This, then, would be the point of my reply: Since these cares are incident to your positions, which you are unwilling to abandon; since they are imposed upon you by a providence which is wise and impartial; since they form a part of the education which in this school you are acquiring:—do not suffer them to carry you by default. Come to an issue with yourselves, in reference to them, precisely as you do in the weightier afflictions of life. Gather up all your faculties and let them be knit together by a single resolution to bear them with composure and dignity. In this sense utter the prayer of David, "UNITE my heart to fear thy name."

This result, to which my counsels would tend, is more surely and pleasantly reached through the influence of prayer, which always brings us to a distinct issue upon the subject of our petitions. There is no prayer in God's sight, unaccompanied by a well-defined purpose. The man, for example, who prays to be delivered from the dominion of some besetting sin, without any present purpose to forsake it, may at once give over his whining before God, who looks with loathing upon his detestable meanness and hypocrisy. That purpose may be so weak as to yield under the first temptation that shall offer; yet it must be honestly cherished in the soul, or the prayer is vacant of meaning So, if the Christian carries to the throne of grace the many vexations of his lot, he can only be sincere as he inwardly purposes to bear them without chafing and without resentment.

6. *In prayer we apprehend the nearness of heaven, which is a motive*

to submission and patience. The Scriptures are full of the earnest longings of the pious for the appearing of Jesus Christ and their introduction into heaven. "I shall be satisfied," says David, "when I awake in thy likeness." [Psalm xvii, 20.] "For our conversation," says Paul, "is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." [Phil. iii, 20.] "Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." [Ibid. i, 23.] "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." [II Corinthians v, 2.] "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Savior, Jesus Christ." [Titus ii, 13.] These are but specimens from a large class of passages familiar to every ear. In no sense implying discontent or impatience, the Christian yet feels an estrangement from earth, a profound conviction that this is not his rest. A pilgrim here, he "seeks a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God." In no exercise in which he engages is he so alive to his separation from earth and his nearness to heaven, as in prayer. The sweetness of communion with God renders this world wholly uncongenial to him, save as the sphere of duty; and forces him to cry out, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee!" He longs for that "crown of righteousness which the Lord, the right Judge, will give him in that day." His eye is dazzled with the brightness of the "inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for him. If, then, in prayer he apprehends all this as near; if, from the delectable mountains, he can descry the shining city over the intervening hills and vales—why should he vex his soul because of the inconveniences of the road, which is soon traversed and which brings him to that glory?

"As when the weary traveller gains
The height of some o'erlooking hill,
His heart revives if, cross the plains,
He eyes his home, though distant still.
While he surveys the much-loved spot,
He slights the space that lies between;
His past fatigues are now forgot,
Because his journey's end is seen."

Such, then, are the aspects in which I would have you view the Apostle's specific against care. I would sum it all up by reminding you that this world, as the habitation of sinners, must of necessity be a world of anxiety. It is the imperative law of our being, from which none are permitted wholly to escape. In looking at the external advantages by which some appear to be preferred, it must be remembered there

are secret trials belonging to these which escape the eye, and are known only to the sufferers and to God. After all, there is wonderful equality in the distributions of providence amongst men. And if the vision could only be realized which is imagined in one of the papers of "The Spectator," in which every member of this complaining race deposits his cares in a separate heap, and all were permitted to make their selection anew—it would end, as there described, in every man's taking up his own burden which he had before laid down.

But I would ask, if God has revealed to us an infallible antidote to care, what right have they to complain who have never tried its virtue? The remedy is infallible. Even the partial application which good men make of it is sufficient to prove its intrinsic power. None have ever been disappointed in its use: and God assures us upon His oath that it will never fail. We are stripped, then, of all excuse for petulance. And if men will not pray, they are convicted by the very murmurs they indulge. The fretful Christian is of all others the most inexcusable; for the Word has sought him out—"Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." May "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your minds and hearts, through Christ Jesus!'

XXXVII.

THE THRONE OF GRACE.

HEBREWS iv, 16:—"*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace.*"

I purpose little more, this morning, than simply to emphasize this expression; for it is a remarkable combination of words. The throne of grace! The throne is the seat of royalty. On it kings sit in the administration of the affairs of the realm. It is, therefore, the symbol of majesty, dominion and power. Hence God is represented as seated upon the throne of the universe and clothed with majesty; as you will find in the ninety-third Psalm: "The Lord reigneth; he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself. * * Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting" But then this throne is to us the THRONE OF GRACE. Grace, in its generic sense, is simply favor; and when dispensed to sinners, it is favor to the undeserving, just as mercy is shown to the guilty. The idea lodged in this phrase is that God's awful majesty and dominion are to us, in the Gospel, enshrined in the bosom of His LOVE: "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

I have said that the expression, "the throne of grace," is wonderful; but how is the wonder increased when you put along with it the exhortation to come boldly to that throne? Boldness before God! Jehovah never manifests His personal presence without affecting all nature. The heavens are bowed at His coming, and the earth trembles at His feet. The spotless angels, who worship before the throne above, veil their faces as they gaze upon His glory. How, then, shall man be bold, and man the sinner—man who is arraigned before the bar of his own conscience, and compelled daily to hear the tremendous indictment against him—how shall such a being go into God's presence with boldness? I propose, then, two thoughts. In the first place, WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF THIS BOLDNESS WITH WHICH WE APPROACH GOD? And

then, WHAT IS THE WARRANT FOR THIS BOLDNESS IN COMING TO A THRONE OF GRACE? As to the first of these questions, I answer,

1. *That it implies deliverance from that bondage of guilt which makes the soul tremble at God's personal presence.* All the religions of earth, with the exception of Christianity, are religions of fear. You may go down to the bottom of the scale and begin with the devil-worshippers in Africa, and rise by degrees until you reach the most polished and refined system which human thought has ever devised, and the discriminating feature of all false religions is that they are religions of fear. God cannot be construed to human thought except as the great and dreadful God, "glorious in holiness and fearful in praises." We hear His voice in the thunder. We see the gleam of His eye in the flash of the lightning. We note His step in the march of the tempest. All over nature, by the signs of His judicial visitations, we are made to tremble under a sense of Jehovah's majesty and power. Until you strike a scheme of reconciliation with God; until you can first bow at an altar, and appear with the propitiating blood in the presence of this inexorable justice—all human experience proves that God is to the human soul an object of dread. But the Gospel gives to us a Redeemer; God's own Son coming from the bosom of the Father and taking our place under the curse, sweeping the condemnation out of our path, making complete expiation for human guilt, and then with His own blood ascending into His Father's presence to discharge the office of Intercessor there. Thus a most precious sense of pardon is sealed upon he sinner's conscience; which deprives him of his antecedent dread, and enables him to come with boldness to the throne of grace. The first element of this boldness is the discharge of the sinner's conscience from that sense of guilt, which makes the person of God unutterably terrible to our thought.

2. The second element of this boldness is *the perfectly free and intimate intercourse between our souls and God.* This is the exact shade of thought lying in the word which the Apostle chooses here, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. As every Greek scholar will perceive as soon as he turns to the original, this boldness is simply free-spokenness—the bold frankness which the creature has to tell God everything, to go down into the depths of his own sinfulness and bring out every secret transgression in honest confession, to articulate in the ear of Jehovah every emotion, to express every desire, to utter every thought. Thus, my hearers, there is a freedom in our intercourse with God which immeasurably transcends the intimacy of that intercourse which we hold

with each other. I will not pause to say that there are forms of feeling in every human breast which, from their nature, are incapable of being translated into speech. Words are utterly inadequate as moulds in which to cast the thought. There are affections for which we find no terms, in any of the dialects of earth, in which to give an adequate expression of what we feel. But we express all these to God without conventional and intervening symbols; for He that "searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins," "knoweth our *thought* afar off." And then how much there is in all human experience which a man is restrained by shame from expressing to his fellow. A ghostly apprehension exists that, if we expose all that is within us, the bonds of human friendship will be ruptured by the discovery of so much that is unutterably base But we can venture into the presence of the great God and lift up the prayer of the Psalmist: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Oh, the boldness in our intercourse with God, when we ourselves take the covering of concealment from the heart, and lay bare to the inspection of the omniscient God everything that He can find within us! Surely this is boldness, when we are able thus to disclose the secrets of our thoughts and of our desires to Him that searcheth us; and when, in return, God whispers to us His secrets—"For the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant."

3. The third and last element which I will mention as entering into this boldness, is *the power of asking for large blessings upon the sight of a most perfect title.* Ambition is doubtless one of the instincts of our nature. It is simply the desire to be fair in the eyes of the good, the honest purpose to put forth the whole power which God bestows upon us in the execution of heroic deeds, and by noble achievements to challenge the admiration of the ages that shall come after us. This irrepressible longing for an enduring fame lies at the foundation of the grandest efforts which have been made by the noblest spirits of the earth. Now when grace sanctifies this principle of our nature, and directs it to proper ends—when we place the telescope to our eye and see in the long perspective, as we look down the vista of eternity, the prizes that lie beyond the judgment bar; when an honest purpose is stirred within us to attain the peerage of heaven, to be written by the finger of the Judge amongst the nobility of the skies, to spring above the level of this low mortality and stand upon an equality with the angels—nay, to bound even beyond them, to take our place immediately

around the person of our reigning Head in heaven, and pitch with these sanctified human lips the key-note of heaven's eternal praise; to sing in the hearing of angels "the new song," which they know not in its sweetness and power until they hear it from our redeemed lips, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for he hath redeemed us with his own blood and made us kings and priests unto God in his temple forever:"—Ah! my hearers, when God's Spirit puts all this before the eye and the deepest energies of the soul are brought forth in the seeking for these high honors, we have boldness at a throne of grace to ask great things of God. Kingdoms and empires, sceptres and thrones, as we see them here upon the earth, a sanctified and Christian ambition esteems as but the baubles of an earthly childhood. But to be an "heir of God," to be a "joint-heir with Christ," to sit upon His throne even as He is seated upon His Father's throne, to share with Him in that immortal prize which He accepts as the reward of His own humiliation—this is a glory which may well intoxicate the soul in its loftiest aspirations here upon the earth. And so, grasping by anticipation the rewards of the eternal world, in the freedom of our personal intercourse with God, we spread before Him this large ambition, and take beforehand the immense honors which are to accrue to us in the kingdom of His glory. Without dwelling longer, then, upon this thought, these three elements combined will sufficiently characterize the nature of the boldness with which we come to a throne of grace.

But what is the warrant of this boldness, as stated in the terms of the text? Says the Apostle, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." I desire to point out THE WARRANT FOR THIS CHRISTIAN BOLDNESS, FURNISHED IN THE FACT THAT WE COME IN OUR PLEADINGS TO A THRONE OF GRACE.

1. In reference to this, the first remark is that *grace converts our very discouragements into the warrant for our approach.* My hearers, the more I ready and study these wonderful Scriptures, a new astonishment overtakes me every day in the amazing paradoxes of grace—the wonderful oppositions which have their sweet reconciliation in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here is one of them—grace taking our very

discouragements and putting them in our hand, that we may hold them up before that throne as the warrant for what we ask. When the Holy Spirit has convinced a man of his sin, he is overwhelmed with a sense of his unworthiness as well as of his guilt. One would suppose that it was enough to feel the bare sense of *guilt;* but along with this comes the oppressive *shame*, when the soul is obliged to look at sin in its horrible deformity, and the whole moral sense is shocked at its utter and detestable meanness! How difficult, under this conviction, first of the guilt and then of the shame of sin, to make our approach into God's presence! Therefore it is that the sinner finds it so hard to pray. And we, too, brethren, when our faith becomes for a moment obscure, and our hold upon the Redeemer is slightly relaxed—how the old dread of God comes back to us, and we cower under the apprehensions we have of His holiness and of His truth! We are obliged to exclaim, with Job, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

How shall a man take all this shame and find it transmuted by the power of divine grace, so that it gives him the right to go to the throne and to lay it all before the eye of Him that sits with majesty upon it? Ah, if this were a throne of majesty alone, I can well see how you and I should be afraid and ashamed to go. If it were a throne of holiness and of justice alone, such as that which will be placed upon the clouds in the last great day, I can understand how, under this unworthiness and guilt, we should be paralyzed with fear. But no; it is the THRONE OF GRACE, erected expressly for sinners, designed to meet the very exigencies of our case. If we were not sinners, we would not have needed a throne of grace. We could have gone in our white garments and worshipped before the throne in heaven, with the angels and with the cherubim. But because we are sinners and need grace, therefore is this throne erected upon the earth, which is spanned by the rainbow. And the blessed Redeemer, under the arch of that rainbow, proclaims to men trembling under their guilt, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Thus we come to see that the discouragement, under which before we labored, is the very plea which we are to present; that our vileness is the very argument with which we are to prevail; that all this sin and shame constitute the warrant upon which we approach a THRONE OF GRACE. The sting of apprehension is removed, when we find this throne constructed expressly that we in all our unworthiness may come freely to it and obtain the help we need.

2. *We have boldness at this throne of grace, because we see one wearing our own nature seated upon it.* There is no little power in the fellowship of nature. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." Wherever you see a human form and recognize a being that is here on earth under similar conditions with your own, you find yourself drawn to that person and knit to him in fellowship. Nay, there is much in that race-feeling which springs from the blood relationship that obtains in the family. How strong those affections which arise from community in the same stock! As the circle widens out from the family, until in its enlargement it takes up the whole race of mankind into a common brotherhood, there is in this fellowship of nature and of race a power to make us feel and sympathize, which, perhaps, we cannot in our philosophy exhaustively explain. Well, there upon the throne sits our "Elder Brother," bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, just as truly man as He is God; one who, as man, walked upon the earth as we walk upon it, who had experience of all that this world gives to us Therefore He has in the heavens a fellow-feeling with us, growing out of this fellowship of nature; a real sympathy with us in all the trials in which we are placed, because, as a man, "he was tempted like as we are, yet without sin." And the knowledge that He is our own brother, of our race and of our blood, gives us confidence in making our approach before him.

Bear in mind, also, that *Christ has a perfect sympathy with us in our sin.* Ah, we often think of the preciousness of Christ in our sorrows, when we recoil instinctively from all the approaches of human sympathy. I speak of grief in its first access to the human soul. I suppose that every grown up person in this house understands something about it. When earthly friends come with their premature commonplaces to us, how impatiently we repel them and say, with Job, "Miserable comforters are ye all!" In the hour when the soul is breaking under the anguish which it is called to sustain, we want a friend who can go down into the core of our hearts, who can absolutely put his soul in our soul's stead, and feel in all its intensity the weight of our woe. Therefore it is that in times of bereavement we turn to Him who was "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and rejoice that He "not only bore our sins but also carried our sorrows." But, my brother, I beg you this morning to take up the thought and lay it in the centre of your heart, where it will never be forgotten until your dying hour, that this Jesus has as true a sympathy with you in your SINS as in your SORROWS. When you are becoming cold and distrustful, and going back to the

weak and beggarly elements of the world, and allowing yourself to be absorbed in the impertinencies of the passing hour, forgetful of prayer and of the privileges of fellowship with Him—that Redeemer looks from His throne of grace upon you, as in the judgment hall of Pilate He looked with the eye of rebuke and yet with the eye of pity, of forgiveness and of love, upon the sinning Peter. If you can but catch that eye as it is looking down upon you in your sinning moments, it will do with you just what it did with Peter: it will melt you down into penitence at once, and you will go into the dark and weep bitterly. You will be spellbound by the fascination of that eye, because it looks upon you with forgiving and rebuking love. There will be such a spell in it as to bring you back in bitter repentance, which afterwards becomes so sweet, until you are again enfolded within His embrace. Therefore we "come boldly to the throne of grace." The King upon that throne, when we are wandering away, nay, when we are breaking into open sin, is saying to us, "Behold the Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world." He is pointing from His throne to that cross by and through which he purchased salvation for us, and He is inviting us to come and hang all these new sins upon the extended arms of that cross. The One upon that throne wears our nature; and He not only sympathizes with us through fellowship in that nature, but, by His own experience of all that there is in sin to hurt, He has the truest sympathy with us in the moments when we are the most undeserving of it. No one on this earth knows about sin as Jesus Christ does. No one ever bore sin as Jesus Christ bore it. No one, even in the moments of his greatest spiritual agony, ever felt the weight of sin, or the shame of it, as Jesus felt it, in that hour when He hung a wailing man upon the tree, and cried out in the extremity of His woe, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Jesus knows what God's judicial anger is. He knows what it is to be abandoned by His Father; He knows what it is to be entirely deserted by the holy; He knows what it is to be hung up between the heavens and the earth, expiring there in His loneliness and in His sorrow, feeling all that is involved in sin to hurt and to grieve. With this bitter experience of all that is in sin to do you and me harm, He tells us to come boldly to His throne; because there grace is provided for us, not only to pardon sin, but to break its dominion and deliver us from its power and its bondage forever.

And then *this Jesus, on His throne of grace, knows the exact value of His atoning sacrifice.* I suppose that, to-day, if any Christian in this house could measure with his thought the exact value of Christ's atone-

ment, he would be incapable of fear or of distress. But who can take the measure of that perfect work of Jesus? And this is what makes the intercession of Christ so precious to us. The Advocate, who wrought the work, knows its measure exactly. He can rise to the height of His own argument, and can plead before the inexorable justice of the Father His own complete satisfaction of all legal demands. Knowing the value of His own atoning work, He sits upon "the throne of grace" and tells us to come perfectly trusting and perfectly fearless. And, as the Spirit reveals this to us, we come boldly, because our Elder Brother, who wrought out this atonement, is seated upon the throne to dispense the grace which He has Himself purchased.

3. *We come with boldness to this throne of grace, because Jesus, as the King upon that throne, has authority to seal all our privileges with the majesty and authority of His Father's law.* This is the title upon which He reigns: "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." At the Father's right hand the Mediator wields the sceptre of law, and administers that law as it is now pervaded by grace. And so, because He has the legal right to sit upon this throne, He holds in His right hand what I cannot better describe than as the original SEAL OF STATE, and stamps with the authority of the eternal Father the parchment which conveys to us all our privileges on earth and all our rights in heaven. Invest this Monarch, therefore, upon that throne, with all the majesty that belongs to law; and realize that He is King, holding in His hands the original seal, and can stamp with the divine authority all the privileges and rights which we can hold. When God's Spirit reveals this to us, it will be strange if we do not "come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

4. *We come with boldness to the throne of grace, because the throne confers rewards and bestows dignities.* It is from the throne that the nobility proceeds; and whenever the peerage needs to be recruited from the ranks of the commons, it is done by a patent which is granted from the throne. Because the King is seated upon this throne, all dignities and privileges are conferred by Him. "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ," we shall reign with Him because we have suffered with Him. Sharing in His humiliation, equally sharing in His exaltation, we shall sit at His right hand as He is seated at His Father's right hand. The honors and dignities which will be conferred upon us in heaven, will come from Him who is seated upon this throne of grace. We know but little, indeed, of the details of the heavenly state, and must

restrain our speculation to the hints given to us in holy Scripture. But do you suppose that you are going to carry your activities into that spiritual world, to do nothing? Do you suppose that, when invested with a spiritual body which shall be freed forever from the bondage of sense, with bodily organs akin to the spiritual powers of the indwelling soul, you are to sit down upon a cloud through all eternity and simply open your lips in a perpetual psalm-singing before God? Do you suppose that there is not to be a large work for every man that has a heart there? We shall reproduce in heaven, as from the pages of a book, every line of this earthly experience, every pain, every grief, every disappointment, every anxiety, every care—everything which God sanctified and made to us a means of grace, we will reproduce from the storehouse of memory, and embalm it in praise and song; and thus shall we teach the very angels how to praise the Lamb and Him that sitteth upon the throne forever and forever. We know not with what swiftness we may be called to speed from world to world to proclaim the mighty mysteries, not only of God's creative power, but of God's redeeming love. And if there be these high activities reserved for us in the far future, there will be corresponding rewards, corresponding dignities, corresponding privileges. We shall ascend higher and higher in degree as these powers expand; and God shall bestow upon us dignities and honors which shall be graded by our knowledge and our power to serve Him. All those dignities will come from the throne. Every privilege will be bestowed by the King who sits upon the throne of grace. Thus "we come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

And now, my hearers, what fault have you to find with the Gospel? Where does it break down? Can you complain of the atonement? Is it not sufficient? Can you impeach the pardon? Is it not perfect? Can you find fault with the Intercessor? Is He not before the throne, pleading the merit of His great work? Has not the work been admitted already to record? How came this High Priest of ours to pass into the heavens, except that in His very exaltation it shall be entered upon the archives of the court, that the great atoning work which He wrought upon the earth is sufficient for the redemption of a whole world of sinners? Scanning the Gospel in all its features, what fault have you to find with it? Rise up in your place and impeach this Gospel anywhere. If you cannot impeach it, why do you not accept it? If, after the most critical scrutiny, you can find no flaw in this system from

beginning to end, you are bound by your own judgment in the premises to accept it. You remember him who was speechless, because he had not on the wedding garment: Sinner, you will not, by and by, have a word to say; but your silence will be the silence of despair, giving way at last only to the eternal wail. I beg you, by the intrinsic value of the Gospel, to accept it. Do not put such dishonor upon yourself as to reject it. Do not discredit your intellect by rejecting it. Do not put the stain upon your conscience of rejecting it. Here it is, in all its parts, laid open fair and clear to your eye. I insist that every man is bound by his intelligence to accept this Gospel; and that he dishonors his mind, dishonors his conscience, dishonors his heart, unless he can produce a better. I hold you to the alternative. Give me a better atonement, a better pardon, a better Savior, a better heaven—give me a better Gospel, and then I will talk about disposing of this. But if, through all the records of the past, you search in vain for a system that will compete with this—if you cannot solve the mighty problem of sin and of law, and produce a righteousness which shall eclipse the Savior's obedience—I tell you, my friend, I mean to hold fast to this Gospel and to accept nothing in its stead; to live by it, to die by it, expecting to be tried by it at the judgment, and to hold through it all the privileges and enjoyments that shall accrue hereafter. And I insist that every principle of your nature holds you to the same responsibility. It is a wrong done yourself, no less than a grievous wrong done to your Lord, even to hesitate about accepting this Gospel and building every hope of eternal life upon its promises.

XXXVIII.

THE DOOM OF SODOM UPON UNBELIEVERS.

LUKE x, 12:—*"But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city."*

It was predicted of Messiah that His advent should be heralded by a fore-runner. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." [Malachi iii, 1.] One should appear with the spirit, and in the power of Elias, whose voice should be heard crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." [Isaiah xl, 3.] This prophecy was fulfilled, you remember, in the mission of John, the Baptist: who, six months before Christ entered upon His public ministry, appeared in the wilderness of Judea, "having his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey" [Mat. iii, 4[; preaching the baptism of repentance, and proclaiming the kingdom of heaven as at hand.

Substantially in the same category we must place the mission of the Twelve, and a little later of the Seventy; who were sent through the towns and villages of Judea, with the same testimony, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." It is no slender proof of the tender faithfulness of Jehovah in not cutting off a soul without previous and sufficient warning, that the Jewish nation was not suffered to reject their Messiah until public proclamation of His kingdom had twice been made, and with this a full tender of all the privileges which it secured. In the case of the Seventy, this proclamation was made as the ministry of our Lord was drawing to a close. They were instructed therefore to move with haste, not pausing to salute any by the way. They were emboldened by the Master's sanction, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." If rejected in any place, they were commanded to shake off its very dust from their feet; and in departing, they must fix their solemn protest upon the gates—in emphatic and

official warning that the blessings of the new kingdom had been forfeited and were now publicly withdrawn.

It is in connection with this testimony that the asseveration of Christ assumes such terrible significance, "It shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city." Sodom, flagrant as were its crimes —and they were such as drew upon it the vengeance of fire, sinking its very site beneath the waters of the Dead Sea—yet Sodom had never "trodden under foot the Son of God, nor had counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith it was sanctified, an unholy thing." [Hebrews x, 29.] Its devoted inhabitants never belonged to that family, "to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." [Romans ix, 4.] In the righteous sovereignty of Jehovah they had been left to construct a religion from the oracles of nature, from the deductions of reason, and from the fragments of an original revelation traditionally preserved. In comparison with them, the Jews had been exalted to heaven in the privileges of God's ancient covenant: and as their guilt was greater, so would their doom be the heavier.

The whole passage, then, justifies this position: that A REJECTED GOSPEL INDUCES ALTERED RELATIONS OF THE SINNER TOWARDS GOD, WHICH MUST AT LAST PUT HIM FOREVER BEYOND THE PALE OF THE DIVINE FORGIVENESS. With deep solemnity of feeling, I ask you with equal solemnity to consider this statement, so fearful in its sweep: that whether it be a single individual, or a collective community, a final rejection of Christ causes either to stand in a different attitude to the law and government of God.

1. *The Gospel furnishes such a vindication of the supremacy and majesty of the divine law, as makes the rejection of the former altogether a new and more malignant offence against the latter.* I have no idea that we can form in this world an adequate conception of the essential vileness of sin. Indeed, until we are are born again, and thus put in some degree of sympathy with the holiness of God, we have no notion of this at all. The formal definition of sin, as "the transgression of law," yields to us a logical and formal apprehension of it as contravening a just and wholesome authority—in which sense it is emphatically true that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." But until we are spiritually enlightened to see the excellence of this law itself and the glory of that holiness which it reflects, we have no perception of the intrinsic malignity of the sin which is in direct opposition to it. The spiritual discernment of this is among the earliest evidences of the spiritual life implanted in

the new birth; and the increasing intensity with which the true hatefulness of sin is perceived and detested, is one of the clearest tokens we can possess of growth in grace. Still, even the most sanctified on earth must mourn over the feebleness of that spiritual instinct which recoils from sin, and over the obtuseness of perception which fails to realize it in its native vileness. Perhaps nothing short of the experience of heaven, or of hell, can give us an exhaustive conception of the real atrocity of sin. Only the sense of the divine holiness experienced in the joys of the one or in the pains of the other, can lay the foundation for an apprehension of the inward evilness of sin itself, which is the contradiction of that holiness.

There is, however, one view of this matter which may enable us to approximate its fearful import. A few hints are dropped upon the pages of the Bible which seem to suggest that if sin be committed with a full knowledge of all that it involves, there are principles in the divine government which put it forever beyond the purposes of the divine mercy to pardon or to save. Take, for example, our Lord's prayer on the cross, "Father, forgive them, *for they know not what they do.*" Does not this imply that, if they comprehended fully the nature and extent of their crime, it would be placed beyond the pale of forgiveness? This is the force of the plea on their behalf: that awful as their guilt might be, it was restrained within certain limits by reason of their ignorance of all that their act implied—and this brought it within the principles of the divine administration, which made pardon at least possible. Had it been otherwise, the petition must have been suppressed upon the lips of the great Intercessor. Paul appears to recognize the same distinction when, describing his former state as a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious, he adds, "But I obtained mercy *because I did it ignorantly* in unbelief." [I Timothy i, 13.] Evidently, he does not mean to extenuate his previous guilt. He rather shows his sense of its enormity, by proclaiming that only his inability to measure the significance of his actions brought it within the scope of that grace which was exceeding abundant in Christ Jesus. There are principles in the divine government which justify the Apostle John in speaking of "a sin which is not unto death," for which the prayer of intercession may be offered; and again to say, "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." [I John v, 16.] What means, too, "the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven unto men," if there be not some determinate principle upon which the divine policy is made to turn in the administration of His law? And then there is the frightfully solemn warning of the

Apostle Paul: "*For it is impossible* for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." [Hebrews vi, 4-6.] Whatever else these fearful sentences may or may not teach, they clearly imply the possibility of committing some forms of sin for which the grace of God has provided no salvation.

Corresponding with this, we have the actual procedure of God with two distinct classes of transgressors, placed upon record for our instruction. There are "the angels which kept not their first estate," who were immediately abandoned to the consequences of their sin—for whom no redeemer was provided, who were simply given over to justice under the operation of naked law—and who, Jude tells us, are "reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." And then there is man who sinned "after the similitude of the same transgression," to whom a Savior was instantly promised in "the seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head." It would be altogether presumptuous and unsafe for us to assign the reasons for the divine discrimination between the two. It may have been simply an illustration of that sovereignty which "hath mercy upon whom it will have mercy." But it is difficult to shut out the conviction that there were differences in the criminality of the two, which rendered it proper and wise to make the distinction which actually obtained. It is at least easy to suggest, that the angels were endowed with higher capacities—that they stood in God's presence, enjoying a larger revelation of His glory and power—and that their rebellion was wholly spontaneous and self originated: whilst man, feebler in his original endowments, was placed at a greater remove from Jehovah, and was brought under the power of evil through the seduction of a tempter. Even though the essential malignity of sin be always the same, here are peculiarities in the circumstances of both which may have put such a difference between the two as needed to be recognized in the treatment they should receive at the hands of the Judge. The great principles upon which God administers His government, and which we are here perfectly incompetent to expound, may have required a different policy towards these two respectively. It is certainly conceivable that the sin of the angels may have been of that type, which rendered it proper that the Lawgiver should discriminate against them with such terrible severity. Of course,

you will not construe these suggestions as placing any limitation upon the resources of Jehovah, either as to His wisdom or His power: much less, as fettering in the least degree the absolute freedom of His will. It is only intended to be suggested that His wisdom, which is infinite, may have established just such large and comprehensive principles of government as put their rebellion wholly outside of any provisions of mercy and of pardon—and that His holy will only executed these in leaving them to the consequences of their crime, under the operation of that law whose nature and force they perfectly understood.

You are now, my hearers, in possession of the great principle which these illustrations are adduced to signalize: that there is such an inherent malignity in sin, considered as the antithesis to all that is holy and glorious in the nature of God, as to demand punishment without the possibility of mercy, whenever committed under circumstances which prove the transgressor to be fully cognizant of its import. With this principle, then, in your grasp, I wish you to see how near the man comes to this fatal position, who steadily and finally rejects the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The grace by which the sinner is saved does not consist in setting aside the law under which he is condemned, but in meeting its requirements. A Redeemer is provided, who comes under the curse on his behalf and renders the obedience which was originally exacted. Upon this point the testimony of Scripture is both full and explicit: "Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty." [Psalm lxxxix, 19.] "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." [Isaiah liii, 5.] "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." [Romans v, 6.] "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that *the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." [Ibid. viii, 3, 4] Neither the rigor of the precept, nor the sternness of the penalty, was abated in the least degree. Both were laid upon the Substitute, who had assumed our legal responsibilities; and both were discharged by Him, on our behalf, to the very last requirement. How could Jehovah vindicate with greater emphasis the supremacy and majesty of His law, than by this proceeding? If ever there was a case in which some abatement of the rigor of divine justice might be expected, it must have been in favor of this well-beloved Son—

this sinless sufferer, whose transcendant love consented thus to bear the guilt which was not His own. Yet was there no abatement of the curse even to Him. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief," and "made his soul an offering for sin." [Isaiah liii, 10] He, then, who rejects the Gospel, sins with a new offence against the law, which that Gospel has magnified. The sinner has, through it, a new disclosure of the honor in which God holds His law. He sees that under no contingency can its obligations be superseded. Infinite love itself must work out its scheme of salvation for lost man through a redemption. The divine government rests upon principles which are eternal and immutable. A new and startling revelation has been made of the rectitude of the law, and of the holiness of its Author. The creature cannot understand the provisions of the Gospel, without perceiving the excellence and glory of the law whose majesty it upholds. The one cannot be rejected, without open defiance of the other. With the deeper knowledge of the divine holiness which the Gospel affords, the sin against law assumes a most fearful malignity. Nearer and nearer the unbeliever approaches that mysterious line, beyond which the offence becomes irretrievable. When the last fatal rejection of Christ is reached, the law which has been outraged closes down upon the sinner in the enforcement of its necessary principles, and seals the condemnation which can never hereafter be cancelled.

2. *In rejecting the Gospel, we sin against the grace which is now incorporated with the law in its administration over men.* At first, the dispensation was one of naked law, under which man was placed for the trial of his obedience. The penalty, death, was affixed as its sanction: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The divine holiness required this for its security; justice was armed to enforce the decree; and the divine veracity stood sponsor for its due execution. All the attributes of God were equally pledged to uphold the majesty of law and the supremacy of this wise and just government. But Jehovah is equally gracious and loving. In devising, however, a scheme of salvation for those whom sin had brought under the power of the curse, God must sink down into the abyss of His own nature and bring out a principle, hitherto undiscovered, which shall meet the exigencies of the case. That principle is GRACE: which must be revealed, not simply as an abstract perfection of the Deity, but as a potential fact, having its historical outworking equally with justice or holiness itself. We have already seen the method of its disclosure: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them

that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." [Galatians iv, 4, 5.] Law is upheld, whilst mercy is shown. Through Jesus Christ, in whom all the claims of justice are satisfied, a free pardon is offered to all who will accept it as procured by Him. This is "the righteousness" which God hath "declared, for the remission of sins—that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." [Romans iii, 25, 26.] In order, then, to secure the sinner's pardon, God is seen, so to speak, to reconstruct His government anew. Having fully sustained its purity and vindicated its supremacy, through the obedience of His Son, He now incorporates this feature of grace into the law which is administered by this Son as our Mediator—and obedience is required to it as the law of grace. I cannot pause to run the distinction out into the details which are so full of comfort to the Christian, who now finds himself "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ." [I Corinthians ix, 21.] The general fact is all that concerns us at present: that under the Gospel, law is to be viewed as tempered with the grace which has been infused into its administration by Jesus Christ, the Mediator.

The special aggravation of sin in the rejection of the Gospel will, from this, distinctly appear. It is now not simply an offence against law, but against love. As we have before seen, the Gospel affords the highest illustration of the binding force of the law in the unchangeable rectitude of its original requirements—and to sin against this new disclosure of its awful majesty, must place the unbeliever under a new and most special condemnation. But the topic now under consideration raises an issue still more fearful. God has been pleased in the Gospel to reveal to us the fulness of His own goodness. He has drawn out the tenderness of His heart, in the gracious offer of pardon to the transgressor. When this is despised, the greatest affront has been rendered of which man is capable. It is now not defiance of authority, but contempt of goodness. It is dishonor thrown upon the divine affections, in the softest exhibition of all that is most generous and winning in the character of the Deity. It is not the resistance of His will as the Lawgiver, but it is the rejection of all His tender offices as the Father and Redeemer. My hearers, even amongst men, in these purely earthly relations, LOVE is the holiest sanctity that is. Its obligations are the strongest, just because the sweetest. It carries its appeal within itself; and dispenses with force, because loyalty to it is of its own nature spontaneous and cordial. We cannot trample upon a child's love, when it bubbles forth in yearning delight upon a parent's care. We cannot

tread profanely beneath our feet the mother's love, that pleads with us in our youthful folly. And that mystery of love which binds us into one as the husband and the wife, how the sweetness of its charity gathers into a sheaf all the counsels and purposes and affections of the human soul, and lays it a perpetual offering upon the altar of a mutual consecration! Yet, the heart which can be moved by all this, may perhaps be insensible to the highest of all love, when it is shown by God Himself to a lost world! Oh, earth, earth, take back the slander! On all thy broad bosom, say, the heart cannot be found capable of so deep a crime! Yet if there be, hast thou a word, in all thy jarring dialects, which can express its fearfulness? When God comes forth from His pavilion, to reveal the deepest secret of His nature—when, in the gift of His own suffering Son, He discloses His infinite love to a guilty sinner—does the earth any where hide the man whose pulse is not stirred by this drama of sacrificial, dying love upon the cross? Oh, sinner, do not attempt the palliation of saying that you do not reject the Savior—you are only indifferent to His charms. Why, this is the exact definition of the crime—that you have a heart, which *can* be indifferent to the pathos of such a revelation. Think of it, until you begin to shrink, in dreary horror, from the contemplation of yourself! But if it continue thus to the bitter end, what can be the final doom of such a heart, but to rot in its own dreadful deadness forever and forever!

3. *In rejecting the Gospel, we add the guilt of contumacy to that of rebellion.* The condition of fallen man is one of steady resistance of divine authority. "The carnal mind," says Paul, "is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." [Romans viii, 7.] It is evident that here the controversy of God with the race might have terminated. He was under no obligation, of any sort, to provide for them a salvation, or to make a single overture of peace. Each generation in its turn might have been brought into being, suffered to live out its term of sin—to plunge at last into eternal perdition. In the summary retribution visited upon the apostate angels, God has been careful to show that the law had sufficient resources for its own vindication—and that the discrimination made in man's favor, is due alone to the sovereignty of His grace. But through the interposition of a Redeemer, pardon has been secured; and it is offered upon the easiest of conditions. A peremptory challenge is made upon the sinner for his repentance. Let it be observed, then, that this duty is quite as original and obligatory as that of obedience itself. Unquestionably, the first requirement of every creature under law is obedience to its commands.

But, failing in this, the next obligation that emerges is a genuine sorrow for the fault. The two are exactly commensurate. The one springs directly out of the bosom of the other, and is proportioned by it. Whatever of obedience man owed in the first instance, just so much of honest contrition falls due upon its being withheld. The obligation is native and supreme, irrespective of any benefit accruing from the confession, and independent of any consideration of the sinner's ability or inability in the case. It is an original right inhering in the law itself, and in the relation which the human conscience sustains to the divine supremacy. When, therefore, the Gospel makes its call upon man to repent of sin and turn with new obedience unto God, it cannot be set aside without superadded guilt. The sinner offends against a new obligation just as supreme as the other. He contracts a new defilement and comes under a new censure, for refusing to repent, as before for the obedience which he refused to yield. He has made a new and wholly distinct exhibition of his perverseness, and is twice condemned.

Nor is this all. In refusing the pardon which the Gospel offers, his first rebellion assumes a different aspect and becomes *contumacy*. He cannot plead now that he was surprised into sin by sudden temptation. For having perpetrated the act and incurred its consequences, he has had leisure to survey the position and to recognize his folly and wickedness. He cannot plead despair as a reason for continuance in his course; for the step may be retrieved, and the remedy is clearly pointed out to his view. When, therefore, he rejects the Gospel, in which that remedy is provided, he avows his purpose to stand by his original fault—to own and to defend it, to rejoice and to glory in it. What is this but contumacy? He has added a special sin to his previous general guilt: and it is a form of offence which changes his attitude to the government and law of God, from a simple lapse into transgression to that of determined and defiant resistance of Jehovah's rule.

4. *It is a property of our being that acts go back into character, fixing its quality finally and forever.* The propositions are reciprocally true: that character determines the nature of the act, and that the act returns upon the character, giving to it fixedness and permanence. The one statement is little more than the converse of the other; and both flow from the necessary relation of our actions, as the fruit to the tree. The analogy is by no means incomplete. The fruit which a tree bears is the exact expression of its peculiar virtue and life. Hence every tree bears fruit of its own kind: "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles." Just so, every form of action—from the thought or desire

within as the seedling, to the word or deed by which it is interpreted—is the natural expression of our own character. It is as true of men as of the trees in an orchard, "by their fruits ye shall know them." Hence the principle upon which the final judgment will proceed, "and then he shall reward every man according to his works." [Matthew xvi, 27.]

But for the very reason that character expresses itself in the external act, must it determine itself by and through this expression. The simple exertion made in the assertion of itself, chisels the impression and renders it more clearly cut and well defined. A stereotyping process is thus going steadily forward, in which the character is more permanently fixed. We have only to follow the process on to the end, to find that it has assumed a cast which is incapable of change throughout eternity. The only power by which it could be broken up and formed anew, is the power of divine grace. But when the Gospel is finally rejected, the channel, through which this grace is by promise conveyed, is closed forever—and nothing remains to check the force of that principle by which the character crystallizes into the form that must endure as long as being shall last. It is fearful to contemplate the operation of these secret forces, working imperceptibly and silently like those of the natural world, and only to be measured by the final results which through their agency are achieved. But as surely as any being lives, the character is deepening through its own development; as the waters of a stream, by their own rush between its banks, cut the channel through which they flow. Thus, by an inexorable law imbedded in the structure of his own nature, the sinner finds himself at the judgment with a character exactly fitted to the doom upon which he enters. Such is the education, whether for evil or for good, through which we are passing to eternity, and by which we are prepared for a destiny either of punishment or reward!

Perhaps some one will exclaim, in view of all this, Oh, that I had never been born! Possibly, my friend, it may have been better for you, if you never had been. Certainly, if you neglect your soul and die without Christ, you will have occasion to pour forth this bitter wail through a dismal eternity. But then you ARE BORN; and there can be no undoing of this fact, and there can be no escape from the tremendous responsibility which it involves. You *do* exist, a reasonable and accountable being; and you stand face to face with the requirements of God's law, and face to face with the provisions of His blessed Gospel. It is a waste of breath to wish that it had been otherwise. Here you are, con-

fronted with all the responsibilities which attach to intelligence and personal accountability. What do you propose to do? There are plainly two courses between which to choose: you may close your eyes against these obligations, and rush recklessly upon your doom—or you may lay hold upon the salvation which the Gospel offers so freely to your embrace. And the one or the other you will do—but which of the two I know not. If it be the wrong choice—oh, sinner, what then? What, but that it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom than for you!

XXXIX.

THE GRANDEUR OF FAITH.

GALATIANS v, 6:—"*But faith which worketh by love.*"

When the sinner asks the great question, "What must I do to be saved?" the answer uniformly returned in the Scripture is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Under a conviction of sinfulness and utter ruin, the soul simply accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as a Redeemer; and rests upon the salvation which He has provided, just as it is offered in the Gospel. Now, the principle, which thus lays hold upon Christ and appropriates His entire work for this life and the life to come, must be singularly energetic and operative. To the Christian, who has been enabled by divine grace to exercise this faith, the whole matter is perfectly plain; for experience tells him how deep it draws upon all the faculties of his nature. But when we stand in the presence of the impenitent and announce that salvation hangs upon this single issue—that he, who is to be saved from the power of sin here and from the punishment of sin hereafter, must only believe in the Lord Jesus Christ—we seem to announce what is purely a fancy, and a fancy in reference to which delusion is singularly easy. I am not surprised, looking at the simplicity and easiness of this condition, that men, who know nothing except the law and its operation upon the conscience, should turn away from the Gospel with a species of contempt. When all is at stake—when the Holy Ghost brings the powers of the world to come and makes them bear in all their majesty upon the conscience—when the clouds gather in blackness and darkness over the head, and we hear the thunders of Jehovah's wrath rolling ominously above us—and the pit opens its mouth at our feet, and we behold the smoke of its torment ascending forever—is this all you have to say to us? Must we come out from all this patient and earnest working, by law, of our own salvation, and simply depend upon the verbal pledge of a Being upon whom the eye is not permitted to rest? And so men turn away from the simplicity of

the Gospel, and feel that we are demanding of them in this exercise of faith nothing beyond the most simple and foolish credulity.

I apprehend, therefore, my hearers, that I shall not speak without a purpose this morning, if I seek to signalize before you the power of that principle which we call faith: to show how singularly it is operative within us; how deep it goes down into the nature of man as responsible before the divine law; and how perfectly exhaustive it is of the contents of his spiritual being. The Apostle tells us, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Surely, the principle which God's own power works in the soul, and which comes as a special gift from Him, must mean something. "He that believeth hath everlasting life:" for "this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Surely, the faith, which is the first evidence of the new life, and by which the Son of God, in all His glorious work of redemption, is appropriated, must be a work of no ordinary power. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," says John: and the principle by which we are enabled to trample the world with all its temptations and allurements beneath our feet, which makes real to us the things which are unseen and eternal, must be one of no ordinary potency. Says Peter, when vindicating Paul's labors among the Gentiles in the great council at Jerusalem, "God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." That principle by which our sanctification is accomplished; which, having first saved from the guilt of sin, now discharges from its dominion and defilement, must be a principle of no ordinary power. If you will turn to the eleventh chapter of Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, where he arrays before us all the martyrs and confessors of the ancient church, beginning with Abel, who was the first—you will find him summing the long catalogue in these words: "Time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of

cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Now, brethren, that principle which works in all these directions, and which achieves such grand results, is a principle which deserves to be signalized in your hearing; and therefore I ask your earnest attention whilst, not descending into the details of the system, I spread before you certain great and comprehensive proofs of THE POWER OF FAITH AS AN OPERATIVE PRINCIPLE wrought within us by the Holy Ghost.

1. *View, then, the grandeur of faith as the great collective act, in which all the powers of the soul are alike embarked.* If God in the beginning, by the constitution which He gave to man, made him a creature of law; if it can be shown that man fell from his original holiness in the free exercise of all the powers by which he was characterized a responsible being; then it follows that the Gospel, as a remedy, must in all its provisions recognize this fundamental fact. If man, by his very nature, is a being under law, so that you cannot define him except as under its jurisdiction; if man became a sinner in the free exercise of all his intellectual and moral powers: then it follows that, if saved at all, whatever be the method, he must be saved in perfect conformity with the requisitions of that original law. I grant, without argument, that it is a fatal objection to any system of salvation, if it undermines the law. No view of grace can be maintained which is not found, from first to last, to uphold the majesty of law and the integrity of God's government

Now the question arises, where in the system of grace do you find the agency and responsibility of the sinner distinctly recognized? I pause just long enough to give emphasis to the question. Somewhere or other in this grand scheme, God must bring out to view—and man must distinctly feel that his whole agency, as a creature, has been brought into play. Now, I ask, at what point in the Gospel scheme does God bring out the entire responsibility and agency of man as a being under the law? Not in providing the atonement; that is done by another. Not in furnishing the righteousness in which we are to stand accepted before God; that is wrought by another. "Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or,

who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." The whole work of salvation has been already achieved by one from the bosom of the Father, acting as our substitute under the law, satisfying the claims of justice, and rendering obedience to the precepts. Where, then, if we do not work out the righteousness by which we are saved, comes into play our agency? What has man to do in this matter of personal salvation? Where does God place the test of our responsibility and freedom? Exactly at this point. Not in working out a righteousness; not in making atonement for sin: but in accepting the righteousness which is already provided, by cleaving to the Savior whom the Gospel presents to us as our Redeemer. Therefore, with the highest philosophy, do the Scriptures say, "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

I ask you now to notice how completely, in the simplest exercise of faith, every faculty of the human soul is brought into action. There is the understanding, which must employ itself upon the propositions of Scripture in order to perceive what they say. There is the judgment and reason, which must meditate upon what is contained in these statements, in order to see whether they constitute a sound basis for a sinner's hope. Here are the affections, all brought into exercise when we behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and feel that he is to us "the chiefest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely." Here is the will, putting forth its determinate act of choice when it accepts the Lord Jesus Christ and accepts His work; and, in this very act of acceptance, distinctly and consciously repudiates every other ground of trust—exclaiming, with the Apostle, "I desire to be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Nay, even the subordinate faculties of the human soul, such as the imagination and the fancy and the taste, all are brought into exercise in order that the great facts of the Gospel may be presented before the mind as realities which it can touch and apprehend. Even the faith which is but as a grain of mustard seed, over which you and I weep in the closet because it is so feeble, when you come to analyze it in its constituent parts, is found to have drawn upon the whole contents of your spiritual being. It has occupied the understanding, it has employed

the conscience, it has drawn out the affections, it has exercised the will; so that not one single power in man has remained dormant in that faith by which we cling to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We hear the eulogy pronounced every day upon the achievements of intellect. Men spread out their philosophies before us, and we follow the painful steps with which they have proceeded from the first premise to the most distant conclusion. We walk with the scientists, who seem to have wrested from the hand of the Creator the keys of His own universe, and with bold adventure have roamed through its wide domains, opening its secret cabinets and unlocking their treasures to our gaze. And as these high achievements of science and of philosophy are held up before us, we are filled with astonishment and pride. God forbid that I should lack in sympathy with these grand movements of the human mind! But they are the exercise of only one power of our nature, even at the best. They reveal man in the towering reach of his intellect, which is bound to expand throughout the eternal ages, growing larger in its grasp and holding within its embrace the great truths of eternity and of God. By so much as I hope hereafter to see in heaven the boundless glory of Jehovah, and to spread out all my intellect in the contemplation of what is sublime and beautiful in God, am I forbidden this day to utter one word of disparagement upon the proofs of man's gigantic understanding. But I turn to faith, which equally exercises this intellect, which draws out all the affections of the soul and the immense power of the will; which presents man before me in the full complement of his powers; which reveals me to myself in the superb integrity of my nature—and I feel that if, through grace, I have been able to exercise this faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I have put forth an act which has brought out the totality of my being, which has expressed all the constituents of my nature; and which, therefore, in its essential glory, immeasurably transcends all other acts within the compass of the human soul. Under this aspect of it, then, I ask you to look at faith—as the great collective act of the soul, in which a man embarks all the constituent faculties of his being.

2. *Faith is the full and final conveyance of the soul to the Lord Jesus, as His possession forever.* You remember that Christ once said, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Do you wish to know the moment in which that consecration was made? Far back in the silence of eternity, when the Father said, "Who shall go for us, and whom shall I send," there came a voice from His own bosom saying, "I come; in the volume of the

book it is written, I delight to do thy will, oh my God." In that moment when He gave Himself up to His Father's will, He made His soul an offering for sin and consecrated Himself to the great work of human redemption. Having finished upon the cross that work and achieved human salvation, this Jesus stands before us in the offers and promises of the Gospel, making Himself over to us as our possession and our joy. And then it is, just as these promises disclose Him to our view, that we, with a correspondent faith, make ourselves over to Him, in the full conveyance of all that we are and all that we have, to be the possession and the crown and the joy of Jesus Christ forever. In those moments we exclaim, "Other lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name."

Pardon me if I tremble a little in presenting before you the amazing antithesis—God's eternal Son, laying aside the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, speeding to this earth of sin, stooping under human guilt, working out through tears and suffering and blood the work of human redemption; and then, in the promise, standing before the sinner a complete Savior: while you and I, opposite to Christ, look Him in the face, behold Him in the power and grandeur of His work, and, by one sublime act, convey ourselves over to Him to be His in time and throughout eternity. So that the first act of faith, by which we cleave to Jesus Christ, contains potentially within itself every subsequent act. Just as the seed implicitly contains the whole plant which is evolved from it, so all other acts of faith, until the hour when faith shall lose itself in sight, are contained within this first conveyance of the soul over to the Lord Jesus Christ. The soul in its penitence looks back to the hour of the fall and to the original transgression; and feels that by its own innumerable sins it has a thousand times over assumed this original guilt. For, my hearer—God help you to understand it—ten myriads of times, in sins of desire and of thought and of deed, you have, with your own signature, endorsed the original apostacy in the garden of Eden and under-written it for yourself. All your days, by personal transgression, you have assumed that guilt as your own. But now comes the hour when the connection with the first Adam is to be broken, when, as far as in us lies, we openly and publicly recant all our sin; and say to the second Adam, who stands upon the ruins of the first covenant and fulfils all of its forfeited conditions, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." My hearer, is there no power in such an act? and must there not be a divine virtue in the principle which enables you to perform it—when you can thus cut the

connection with all preceding sin, and with him who by his fall precipitated you beneath the curse, disavowing all the transactions of the past, and giving yourselves over in an everlasting covenant to Him who is your Redeemer?

3. *View faith as the germinal grace, out of which the whole experience of the Christian is developed;—the root of all repentance, obedience, love and worship.* Thus I meet the shallow criticism which men sometimes make against the Gospel, when they say, "We turn to one Scripture which declares, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved;' and we turn to another Scripture which proclaims, 'Repent and be converted for the remission of sins.'" And so, with the two fingers resting upon the two testimonies, they ask of what value is that system which, in the very terms of salvation, is found so contradictory? Of what value, practically, is a Gospel which tells the sinner at one moment to believe, and at another to repent; varying thus in the very conditions upon which it rests eternal life? One cannot help smiling with pity at the blindness which fails to see that these exercises spring out of the one divine life implanted in the human soul by the Holy Spirit, and are so correlated that the one cannot exist without the other. Faith and repentance are but the two poles of one and the same truth. As there can be no faith which does not involve repentance as its immediate consequence, so there can be no repentance which has not been preceded by the faith of which it was born: and the difference between the two is simply in the order of thought in which you choose to contemplate them. When you shall presently go out of this building, every step down those aisles towards the door carries you just so much away from your pew: but as egress from the building is before the mind as the object to be attained, the motion towards the door, in the order of thought, precedes the motion from the pew; yet every inch that lessens the distance from the one, increases just so much the distance from the other. The two are necessarily reciprocal. Now what is faith but the eye of the soul looking upon Christ hanging there upon the tree? "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." What is repentance but looking with humility and sorrow upon the sin which is left behind? Faith is but the motion of the soul, under the drawing of the Holy Spirit, up to Christ, clinging to His blessed person forever? Repentance is only abandoning the sin which that Savior has nailed to the cross, and for which we have no other feelings but those of shame and grief. Faith, as the first sign of the spiritual life, is the root out of which our repentance proceeds: for there can be no true sorrow for sin,

except that which springs out of God's forgiving love; and no purpose in man to turn from it with an honest endeavor after new obedience, but in the hope of pardon which has been secured through the cross. Just as the breath is the first sign of the natural life, so faith is the first sign of the spiritual life implanted by the Holy Ghost; and which, whilst it reposes upon the Savior, involves the repudiation of the sin from which He designs to saves us.

Then the faith which accepts the Lord Jesus Christ, accepts Him in all of His offices. The same faith which accepts Him as the Prophet revealing to us the great things of God, accepts Him as the Priest bearing our sins in His own body upon the tree; and the faith which accepts Christ the Prophet and the Priest, accepts also Christ the King. If we accept Him at all, we accept Him in all of His offices and in His whole work. We accept Him as the King reigning over us in His holy and wise providence, and ruling within us by the power and presence of His blessed Spirit. Faith, therefore, becomes the germ of our obedience, accepting the law as now honored and magnified by Christ. He, the King in Zion, binds this honored law upon our conscience, and demands from us the obedience of love—an obedience which we do not bring as the price of our salvation, but which we offer as a token of our gratitude—an obedience which is far too scant for our justification, but which is sufficient to show that we are the members of Christ by a living incorporation into His body—an obedience which we are able to render through the grace which He continually administers, and which is sweetened to us by the proofs of the divine acceptance.

And then love. Why, brethren, love is always begotten, and we love Him because He first loved us. It is just when, through Christ, we see God the Father reconciled, looking upon us with infinite complacency, and bestowing upon us the blessings of eternal life, that our love springs up to Him, reciprocal to that which He has bestowed upon us.

Thus, faith is seen to be the germ, first of our repentance, then of our obedience, and then of that supreme love which we have to God when we love Him with all the heart and with all the soul and with all the strength and with all the mind. And if faith be, as I have sought to represent, the full conveyance of the soul to Christ as His possession, then is it in itself a complete and sublime devotion; and becomes the germ of that positive worship which we render to God upon His throne here upon earth and hereafter in heaven. The joy of the Christian is, that when called to the high exercise of all his faculties in solemn worship, he can gather it up and pour it into the censer of his great High

Priest; who waves it before His Father's throne, and embalms it with His supreme merit, so that it finds acceptance with God. Ah, when you pray, or when you sing, there comes over you the sickening thought, "How inadequate this worship to express God's glory;" and sometimes, under the sense of its perfect unfitness to glorify God as He deserves, the very word is stifled upon your lips—until you can remember that it all goes up through the High Priest, is perfumed with the merit of His perfect sacrifice, and finds acceptance because it is expressed through His lips as the organ of our worship. We take these poor human words, which are the expressions of these feeble human thoughts, and we put them upon the lips of the great Pleader above: and He, the interpreter of man to God, as before He was the interpreter of God to man, takes these praises of ours and speaks them to the eternal Father in the glorious dialect of the Godhead. The praises of this earthly house, and of these human hearts, are pronounced in the kingdom of God's glory, in the temple not made with hands, by the eternal Son, in that holy language in which the Father and the Son and the Spirit speak to each other in the communion of the Trinity. Can that faith be an impertinent thing, which is thus at the root of all the repentance of the sinner, of all the obedience of the Christian, of all the love which God's children have to their Father in heaven, and of that blessed worship in which we shall by and by lead the very angels in the temple above?

4. *See the grandeur of faith as it is the human correlative, and the human measure, of the atonement of Jesus Christ.* Here again, as I put into these cold words a thought that burns like fire, I tremble at the presumption. The obedience of Jesus Christ is the measure of God's holiness. God, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, stamped His attributes upon the law. His wisdom, His power, His justice, His goodness, His truth, His love—all the perfections which make Him the glorious God, are engraved upon the precept and upon the curse which is its penalty. And now God's Son, who comes out from the Father as the only begotten, takes this tremendous law which man has dishonored, puts it upon His conscience and upon His heart, and through suffering and blood, going down into the very depths of the curse, has magnified it forever. Here in the Gospel, and there in the kingdom of His glory, does this Mediator hold up His splendid obedience as the perfect measure of the law of God, and of that divine holiness of which this law is the exposition. And you find that there is a human measure and a human correspondent to this atonement of the Redeemer itself. For when our

faith embraces it—when our faith looks upon the blood of Christ, and upon the obedience of Christ, and upon the sufferings and upon the cross of Christ—when, with all the power that belongs to thought, with all the pathos that belongs to feeling, with all the energy that belongs to will, man brings out his whole nature and grasps that atonement, and draws it up to him, and lays it over against his own guilty conscience, and rests in life and in eternity upon its blessed provisions—you have the best expression that earth can give of its estimate of the glory that lies in obedience to the law. I cannot afford to disparage that faith which thus, in its excursions, travels over the atonement of the adorable Redeemer; which is itself the measure of the infinite justice of God, and takes the dimensions of the boundless glory of Jehovah. Rather let me thank God if, by His Spirit, He has planted that principle of faith in me; and say with the Apostle, "By grace are we saved through faith; and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God."

5. In the last place, *I signalize the grandeur of faith, in that it is the perfection of reason.* Philosophers are wont to glory in the prowess of human reason. My brethren, that reason which God gives to man makes him the peer of the angels. Neither you nor I shall ever put a profane depreciation upon the glory of this reason, with which God has made us in His image and after His likeness. But when these advocates of reason undertake to flout faith, to turn it over to the women and to the children, and say that it is too small a thing for man with his robust intellect—when the man of reason undertakes to put this scorn upon faith, and identifies it with sheer credulity, and estimates it only as a bare and fleeting fancy: I ask him if it is not a little curious that every single process of reason itself takes its departure from that very faith which he despises? I ask the man who looks with this lofty disdain upon the faith of the Christian, how he could enter upon one line of argument, in any one direction pointing to any conclusion anywhere, if there were not planted within him this very power to believe?

There are certain elementary and fundamental beliefs which, in the constitution of the human mind God has planted; and which we accept simply and alone from the necessity of accepting them. I care not for the nomenclature under which you choose to class them, as you pass into this or that or the other school of philosophy. You may call them "intuitions," if you will; you may call them "fundamental and primary beliefs," if you will; you may call them "the principles of common sense," if you will; you may call them "the constituent elements of human reason," if you will; you may call them "the categories of the

human understanding," if you will. Call them what you please, going through the long list of descriptive titles by which they are denoted. But here is the ultimate fact: that God has so constituted the human mind, that it is obliged to accept certain postulates simply from the necessity of accepting them—postulates which man cannot prove—postulates which transcend the power of reason—postulates which constitute the starting point of all reasoning, and without which there can neither be induction upon the one hand, nor deduction upon the other—elementary and final principles, by which every process of ratiocination requires to be verified at the last. You may have a chain of reasoning which shall extend from here to the North Pole; yet if you have not, in some elementary and primary belief, the ring-bolt by which all the links of that chain are fastened to the mind, you reach no conclusion. This language is, of course, not to be construed in the interest of any special school of philosophy; nor as determining the question, how the mind comes by its certainty of these primary truths. Nothing is emphasized but the fact that these are involved in the structure of the mind itself. The absolute trust in their verity is an instinctive and necessary faith—which, in its generic sense, forms the starting point from which reason itself proceeds.

Let me illustrate this, most simply, from the science of mathematics. If I say that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, I by no means state a truth that is intuitive, but one that is demonstrable. But then how do I demonstrate it? By proving that the things that are equal to the same thing are equal to one another. Through the demonstration I carry the mind back step by step until it is landed in one of those original and necessary cognitions. And yet the mathematician will smile, with the most self-complacent disdain, upon the very principle which gives him the postulate upon which his reasoning depends. Now consistency is a jewel; and when you undertake to flout faith, you must go clean through and strike at all these beliefs. When a man tramples upon this *principle* of faith, which demands the acceptance of the Savior, I debar him from the possibility of reasoning on any subject under the sun. If the human reason starts from what it is obliged to accept; if, in all the after process, it is obliged to remand its conclusions to that elementary trust from which it in the first instance departed, in order to verify them—if you are obliged, for example, to believe in the principle of causality; if you are obliged to believe in the fact of your personal identity; if you are obliged, by the necessity of your mental constitution, to believe in the reality of the external world, and to rely upon the

evidence and the testimony of sense which underlies all the demonstrations of our proud physical science; if you are compelled, by the same necessity, to rely upon memory, which hangs together all the links of every chain of reasoning through which you are carried—I say, just in proportion as you reason with power to conclusions that are satisfactory, the verification of those conclusions is found in the elementary beliefs which you accept simply and alone with the trust of faith: and I interdict you, by this known fact, from undertaking to despise or contemn it. The man of intellect, who is proud of his power of thought, is the very last under the broad heavens to despise the principle of faith; which gives him his postulates, and the tests by which his conclusions are verified.

One other suggestion, and then I am done with this point: which is, that if we start from faith, and if all the time we are going back to faith to verify every course of reasoning, it would seem that when we have accomplished the grand circuit and know all things that are knowable, and have proved all things that are demonstrable—it seems to me in perfect analogy with man's mental constitution and with God's high prerogatives, that He should open to us the infinite beyond the finite; that we should rise at last beyond nature up to God; that we should ascend at last above these mortal shores to the immortal; that we should have power, by this principle of faith, to take possession of another world, grander, larger, more glorious than all these myriads of worlds which dot the immensity of space; and that, by and by, when we shall have illustrated all the triumphs of science, we shall be able to put the climax upon all this by the higher triumphs of a grander faith. God is infinite, lying beyond the sphere of human thought. Can He ever be known except through revelation? Could we ever understand Him, except by the power of faith? Great God! hast thou given to us all nature, sky, sun, stars, moon above, and these drifting clouds with their endless panorama of beauty? Hast thou spread this earth and carpeted it with its green, and hid in its womb all those deep mysteries which science is every day disclosing; and is there to be nothing beyond it? And when our seventy years are accomplished, and we have counted the stars and have plumbed the depths of the sea; when we have deciphered the hieroglyphs which the finger of God has traced upon the everlasting rocks; when at last we look upon the dissolving frame of nature as it melts at the coming of the Lord who made it—oh tell me if such a being as man, gifted with powers like his, shall not rise above the wreck of matter and roam the infinite and scan the boundless, and with these culti-

vated powers spend an eternity of blessedness in the sight of the true, in the vision of the beautiful, and in the enjoyment of the good? I can not rot; I am no beast; I cannot lie down in the grave forever; I feel the signature of God in the throbbing pulses of this immortal spirit. I refuse to die; I claim to live by reason of that birth when God breathed into man and he became a living soul. I claim the right to ascend into God's own world, where He uncovers His glory, and to see Him in the perfection and grandeur of His being forever and forever.

Yet for all this we are dependent upon the revelations He shall make to our faith. My hearers, it will not do, it will not do at all, for any man to look down with scorn upon faith, or any system that builds upon it. By the highest attributes of that nature of which he is so proud, I demand of him that he shall rejoice in this prerogative of believing upon a testimony that is sufficient because it is divine.

And then you see the test by which you can determine the reality of your faith. Is it a faith which draws upon all the powers of your nature? Does it produce your intellect? Does it exercise your reason? Does it employ your affections? For faith is something more than the assent of the understanding to testimony. It is something more than the gush of sentiment, or the outflow of emotion. It is something more than an isolated act of the will. It is that which is comprehensive of them all. The faith which receives Christ is a principle which draws upon all the constituents of our being.

And then, last of all, let the sinner, who feels the burthen of his guilt, rejoice in the simplicity of the Gospel. Only believe: for you put forth your whole nature in that act. Say not, "What shall I do to be saved?" Here it is: "He that believeth shall never be confounded." Ah! God's goodness and amazing wisdom, in hanging all upon this hook! that when the sinner is confused, bewildered, oppressed with his convictions that are so full of agony and shame, the one simple direction should always be "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

XL.

HARMONY OF GOD'S ATTRIBUTES IN THE PLAN OF GRACE.

PSALM lxxxv, 10, 11:—"*Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.*"

This passage sets before us the regulative principle upon which the whole Gospel proceeds. By itself, and apart from other Scriptures, we might not be able to map out the method of salvation in its details, because the statement is altogether comprehensive and brief. But with that method articulately unfolded in the New Testament, we are able, with its reflected light, to recur to this passage, and see how the determinate principle here announced works itself out in all those directions. The great thought contained in these words is that GOD, IN ALL THE DEALINGS OF HIS LOVE, IS PERFECTLY CONSISTENT WITH HIMSELF; THAT THE MOST ENTIRE HARMONY OBTAINS BETWEEN THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN THE SALVATION WHICH HE HAS PROVIDED.

With the Bible before us, there are two facts which compel the attention: that upon every page God considers man as a sinner, fallen away from His favor and communion; and that a method of recovery has been both devised and revealed. In reference to these two, man is clearly to be seen under a dispensation of law and also of grace; and the terms, which in the text are set before us in pairs, represent them both. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven." Mercy and truth must meet. Truth which stands for all the attributes which are necessary to God as the Lawgiver and Judge; truth—which, like the warder upon the walls, stands surety for the infliction of the penalty which God's holiness compels and God's justice executes—must meet with mercy; which, on the other hand, presents the aspect of the divine character under which we view Him as a Redeemer and a Savior, and which is the actual application of His compassion and love. These perfections, presented in the

text as moving from opposite sides and coming together in a sweet and perfect reconciliation, are compelled to meet and blend for a two fold reason: partly because of the unity of the divine nature, which does not allow any schism between its attributes; and partly because man, as a moral being, must always remain under the dominion of law, even when made a subject of grace. Whatever, therefore, be the provision of mercy, it must be of such a nature as to meet the requirements of truth. If truth, in the law, says that the penalty must be executed, then all that mercy can do is to provide a substitute upon whom that penalty shall be laid.

But where shall this substitute be found, in whom mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other? This is the problem: how God can be just and yet justify the ungodly. Now, my hearers, let us make this supposition. Let us, in the first place, undertake to find this substitute amongst the creatures. Assemble, if you please, all the angels, the cherubim and the seraphim, in one grand congress, and submit to them the problem whether amongst themselves any can be found august enough to undertake the responsibility, to step forth from their ranks and take the place of the sinner condemned under the law, and experience the infliction of divine justice; and you at once comprehend the nature of that awful silence which prevails through the senate above—all and each shrinking from the tremendous responsibility, under an instantaneous consciousness that they are each and all perfectly inadequate to discharge the trust. To make this out, let us see what the embarrassments are which instantly environ any substitute for the sinner, who is found among the creatures.

For example, *no creature can ever compass God's mercy so as exhaustively to expound it.* By the very terms of the case, the creature, as such, is limited in his powers, whilst the perfection of mercy is boundless in God. How shall that creature, who is finite, sink down into the abysses of the divine nature so as to draw up that mercy which is infinite in God? Even this is not all. For what is required is not merely a didactic exposition of God's mercy, but the actual production of the quality itself as it lies in the divine nature; which, in its potential outworking, shall display its whole force, and that, too, consistently with the justice which it undertakes to meet. Undoubtedly these angels, who are in God's immediate presence and are invested with such larger powers, might be able to tell us much of God's nature. But what man needs in order to salvation, is not the mere exposition of the divine qualities or perfections; giving to us the science of God, just as our natural

investigations give to us the science of nature. Mercy must have its historical outworking, alongside of the justice which it assumes to satisfy. Now when truth, in the holy law, declares that the penalty shall be borne, how shall mercy meet truth in that affirmation but by taking up the penalty, and laying it upon itself, and bearing it to its very last requirement? But how is it possible for any creature, however exalted, to undertake this task? For what is it at last which creates an eternal hell, but that the creature by no finite pains can exhaust the penalty, and so must continue to bear it throughout the ages to come? Here, then, is the first difficulty: that no created being, though he be higher than all the angels aggregated into one, can possibly go down into the depths of the divine nature, and bring out the divine mercy so as to make an adequate exposition of it; far less to produce that mercy as an active quality in God, displaying its entire energy alongside of the justice and the truth which it undertakes to satisfy.

Again, *no creature could entertain the proposition should it be made; and God, in making it, would, in that very act, cancel forever the distinction between right and wrong, and annul His whole moral government.* Mark, this substitution must be voluntary. He who takes the place of the sinner condemned under the law, must do it of his own motion, under the promptings of his own benevolence. It is an obligation precisely of this kind, that it cannot be laid by authority and by force upon any. There can be no virtue in vicarious suffering or in vicarious obedience, unless it be a suffering or an obedience which is cordially and voluntarily rendered by the substitute himself. Now what is it that the substitute consents to do, when he takes the place of the sinner condemned by the justice of God? Why, to come at once into the attitude of a culprit, to pass out from the favor of God, under the curse which condemns him to death—of his own motion to forfeit the favor of God, and to come under the judicial displeasure of the Lawgiver. Upon the bare statement of the case, this is an offence against the fundamental law which requires him, as his supreme obligation and aim, to seek and to enjoy the divine favor. The very instant he consents to forfeit this and to pass under the judicial displeasure of the Lawgiver, he has offended the fundamental law under which, as a moral being, he is placed before God.

Can God, consistently with His own holiness, propose that to the creature which the creature may not lawfully entertain? If it be not lawful for angel or man to consent voluntarily to incur the divine displeasure—does not Jehovah, in the very form of the proposition, cancel forever the eternal distinction between right and wrong, which has its

foundation in His own nature? Does He not put the two upon the footing of indifferency, and make it appear that it is of no sort of consequence whether man shall obey the precept, or whether he shall incur the displeasure of the Lawgiver by its infraction. But this distinction, which lies at the foundation of all government and of all law, cannot be cancelled, without abandoning all control and absolving the subject from the obligation of obedience. May God in heaven forgive the language which supposes it! Apart from the motive which puts the thought into words only to discard it, the very supposition, if seriously entertained, would be blasphemy. Here, then is the second difficulty—not only that the creature cannot go down into the divine nature and bring up the mercy of God, and work it out so that it shall be consistent with justice; but that, if the proposition were made by God to the creature, he could not entertain it, and God would absolve the subject from all obedience and cancel the government which He has instituted.

Again, *if the proposition could be entertained, at that very moment and in that very act the creature would be utterly disabled from executing what he has undertaken.* This, for a double reason: because, on the one hand, having swerved from his original obligation to seek God's favor, by voluntarily consenting to come under the curse, he becomes himself a transgressor, is brought under condemnation, and finds himself precisely in the category of those whom he undertakes to save. How can he, himself a culprit self-constituted, under the condemnation of the law which he undertakes to obey, and in the very posture of those whom he seeks to save, work out a salvation at all? And for the additional reason that, as a creature, his holiness is derived, like his being; and can only be sustained by constant fellowship with the God from whom it is communicated—with which he parts just as soon as he brings himself under the operation of the curse. I will not expand the thought that the holiness of the creature, like his being, is not self-originated and self-sustained. The law of creatureship is that we "live and move and have our being" in the Creator; and that He, having communicated to us the life, by the constant exercise of His power upholds and continues it. He who, by His will, created us in His own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, maintains the principle of the divine life in the soul by continual communications from himself; and the very instant this communion with God is estopped, there is a total loss of the holiness in which that being was at first created. Here, then, is the third difficulty: that when the creature entertains the proposition and assumes the responsibility, he loses the holiness which renders him com-

petent to the trust; and being, by his own act, a culprit under the law and in the condition of those whom he seeks to save, he is forever disabled from executing his task.

Once more: suppose it be accomplished by this creature substitute, *how shall this change the sinner's feelings towards God and towards the law?* The law has not been abated in a single particular. Its demands have been pressed to the very last letter. Whatever mercy has been shown does not consist in relaxing, but in satisfying those claims. But you perceive, upon the supposition which I am seeking to rebut, that this mercy is not God's mercy, but it is the creature's mercy. There may be a divine concurrence in the transaction. The supreme Lawgiver may accept the offering of the substitute; but the mercy which undertakes to solve the problem, and to meet the exactions of justice, is the mercy of the creature who has interposed. It is not the mercy which lies in the depths of the divine nature, and which has a divine outworking through the power of Him in whom that mercy dwells; but a mercy which has no higher origin than the benevolence and will of the creature in whom it is found In this state of the case, the sinner may rejoice in his deliverance, may be filled with gratitude to the benefactor who has interposed in his behalf, and may be overwhelmed with remorse that he has involved an innocent party in suffering. But with his indebtedness simply to the creature, how is it possible that he shall pass over from the creature to the Creator, and give to the great God the worship and praise which are due to Him? Do you not perceive that, under this arrangement, the sinner is absolutely shut up to the necessity of idolatry; compelled to hang his hopes of eternal life upon the mercy of the creature, and therefore constrained by gratitude to give to him all the glory of the salvation which has been accomplished?

Here are these four difficulties, which environ the proposition that Mercy shall meet Truth by providing a substitute who is found among the creatures.

At this point let us make another supposition: that in a way, of course, which we could not have antecedently imagined, God Himself satisfies the rigor of His own law, meets the requirements of His own justice, and works out His own mercy, in perfect harmony with His other perfections. Not one of the difficulties which I have already mentioned attach to this case, which can be shown if we pass in succession over the four. Certainly if it is God's mercy which God Himself is revealing, He is adequate to comprehend it and has the power to work it out; and therefore the first difficulty does not attach. If God never

was Himself under the obligation of the law beneath which He places the creature, which, on the contrary, springs out of His own nature, He violates no obligation if it is in His power to satisfy that law without any abatement of its claims. And if He violates no obligation by satisfying the requirements of His own law, supposing the thing to be possible, why, then, it is lawful for Him to entertain the thought and to work it out; and there is no disabling of Him in the process. It is His own mercy, which is wrought out in consistency with His own justice; and there is a perfect symmetry in the proportions of the scheme. It will only remain to show that there is laid in it the provision for a change in the nature of man, which shall reconcile him to the justice and to the law of God, and cause him to approve that which before excited his enmity.

Thus far you perceive that the plan of mercy, as wrought out by God Himself, meets all the requirements of our case. It gives us the whole Gospel upon its *exterior* side, as that touches our reconciliation with God. Now if you will read a little further in the text and take up the next clause, you will discover that this scheme provides also for a *subjective* change within man himself; by and through which he is so far restored to his integrity, as that truth in him shall meet the challenge of truth in God. Thus the reconciliation, which was before seen to be complete in theory, is found to be complete in experience. "Righteousness shall look down from heaven, and truth shall spring out of the earth." The correspondence is perfect between the two parts of the plan. As respects the sinner's justification, you find the two sets of attributes coming up from their two sides and meeting in the middle. Mercy and truth meet together; righteousness and peace lock in a fond embrace and give to each other the kiss of reconciliation. As a necessary result, the salvation is as complete *within*, as it is *without;* for truth springs out of the earth, lifts itself up from the intelligence and affections of man, and meets the righteousness which looks down from heaven. This righteousness, perfectly satisfied through the obedience of the substitute whom God has provided, looks with complacency upon the sinner in Jesus Christ; and truth in man rises and gazes in its very face, and the reconciliation is perfect between the two.

Dwelling, as I am seeking to do, on the simple terms of the text, and avoiding the immense details of this complex system, I have only two aspects in which to present this latter thought.

In the first place, truth, as the spokesman of the law, says to the creature who is under it, "I must have not simply a righteousness, but

a righteousness that is *perfect;* a righteousness in exact accord with the letter, and which is pervaded with the spirit, of the commandment. "The law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good." The law, considered as a whole, is perfectly holy. The law, broken up into all of its separate requisitions, is "holy and just and good." It rests, therefore, not merely upon the authority of the Lawgiver, which we might suppose to be arbitrary and easily changed; but, as the exposition of the divine perfections and attributes, it is as unchangeable as the Being from whose nature it springs. The Lawgiver must, through all eternity, demand a righteousness which is perfect; a righteousness which covers the whole breadth and plumbs the depth of the law; a righteousness which conforms to every jot and tittle of the letter, and which shall be the full expression of its secret life and virtue. How this thought cuts down all the hopes which are founded upon a partial righteousness! I thank God for the great demonstration of science, which, in all the processes of nature, discloses not only the supremacy, but the perpetuity, of law; which does not allow us, in our most adventurous march, ever to escape from its grasp and control. Standing upon the testimony of Scripture, I hold this up as a symbol of the great fact that so God gives out from Himself a *moral* law, which is the expression not only of His will, but of His nature; and that this law, which is the first revelation which Jehovah ever made of Himself to man, must be as unchangeable and indestructible as His own being. Just as there can be no un-Godding of God—to use the strong quaintness of the Seventeenth Century—there can be no un-lawing of His law. God is eternal and infinite, self-existent and supreme; so lifted up in the oneliness and absolute necessity of His being, that man even in thought cannot destroy Him. With the idea once formed in the mind, it is ever afterwards impossible to unthink Him. If you have thought Him once, you think Him forever; and your very demonstration by which you seek to disprove His existence, will only carve the impression deeper and deeper, and compel you to think Him in the very effort to deny Him. The law, which founds upon the nature of this God, and which expresses His perfections and relations and claims, must be equally eternal and unchangeable. There is no system by which that law can be abridged upon any of its myriad sides; there can be no paring down of its exactions; there can be no shrivelling up of its grand extension. It spreads itself out like immensity; it fills the whole space through which human thought seeks to travel.

This system, in which God finds the substitute for the sinner, unfolds

to you mysteries which, without divine revelation, never could have been conceived. It brings you face to face with the mystery of the incarnation, "God manifest in the flesh"—face to face with the high mystery of the two natures in the one person of the blessed Mediator—so that, in the person of that Substitute, you have the diagram of His work, the very symbol of its achievement. In His divine nature He can protect the interests that are divine; while in His human nature He can represent the interests of the creature. Here in the person of your blessed Substitute and Lord do you find brought together the two poles of all being, the finite and the infinite, the created and the uncreated; and in His complex person the interests that are divine, and the wants that are human, are brought together in a grand reconciliation. Then, pressing beyond this, you are brought face to face with the amazing mystery of the Trinity in unity—God, by virtue of His plural subsistence, saying, "In my person, as the eternal Father, I stand by the law, to see that there shall be no abatement of the claims of justice and of truth;" whilst, in the person of the Son, who, by reason of that mysterious personality, is distinguished from the Father, God can say, "I stand by mercy, to see that its provisions are carried out to the letter." Thus face to face with the mystery of the adorable Trinity, and face to face with the co-ordinate mystery of the incarnation, you have mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace kissing each other. That truth, which in this law admits no abatement, demands of the creature in all worlds throughout eternity a righteousness that is perfect: and truth in man, after it embraces this system, answers the challenge by just holding up the perfect righteousness of Christ. Here is truth speaking with divine authority, claiming from you and from me a perfect record; demanding that we shall live in the possession of a perfect righteousness; that we shall go down into the grave carrying with us a perfect righteousness; that we shall rise in the resurrection with a perfect righteousness; that we shall stand before the bar of judgment with a righteousness which inexorable justice itself shall not be able to disallow. We meet it all by simply presenting the perfect obedience of Him who is our Substitute, who "died and rose again for our justification." If righteousness looks down from heaven, does not truth spring out of the earth? Why look at it. If the law says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," you and I answer in our faith to-day, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Oh law,

thou must not touch me with thy curse! It has been borne by Him who undertook for me. I am dead with Christ, and risen with Him unto newness of life. I am righteous in Him. And then, if the law spreads out its precepts and demands obedience to these, we produce the whole active obedience of our Substitute, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." We lift this up in the presence of the law, and claim acceptance with God. My hearers, we rest upon the granite —upon those primary rocks of justice and of truth which God lays at the foundation of His government. I speak no language of sickly sentiment to the children of men; but I hold up before them a Gospel which is robust, having its root in all the attributes of God, mighty through the outworking of the divine energy, and in which justice lays her plank alongside of that of mercy.

In the second place, truth, speaking on the behalf of law, says to the believer, "Though you be accepted in Christ, yet are you, by the force of your moral constitution, still under the law; and I demand of you an obedience that shall be personal—not the obedience which is vicarious, the obedience of a head; but an obedience that shall be your own." And now, brethren, clothed in white garments, in "the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints," we are able to respond to this challenge, when we offer to the law our own obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ—far too scant to accomplish our justification as sinners; but ample enough, as coming from those already justified, to show that we are integrated into Christ; that we have honestly accepted the law of our Redeemer, and rest upon His righteousness for our justification. It is the proper and natural expression of the gratitude which we feel to Him who has bought us with His blood; in the outworking of which our sanctification is accomplished, and which is the complement of that other righteousness of our Head, complete and meeting all the claims of law, by which we are forever justified before God. Thus does truth in man answer to truth in God; and while the one looks down from heaven, the other springs out of the earth.

Will you allow me to conclude in a two-fold way, addressing that conclusion more particularly to the unconverted in this house? My friends, there can be no putting aside of God's law, and hence there can be no salvation without an atonement. It was not without meaning that the altar of sacrifice, under the old dispensation, was placed in the outer courts; that when the worshipper came to lay his soul before God in adoration and praise, he might first encounter the altar and lay upon it

his propitiatory offering, and might first seek reconciliation with God's justice through blood, without the shedding of which there can be no remission of sins. If there can be no salvation without atonement, then whosoever undertakes to meet the justice of God without it, undertakes that which must be fatal to himself. I know how men feel when appeals are made to their fears; as though it were a sign of weakness to give way for an instant under any presentation of their peril. Surely this is not courage. Courage is no instinct that belongs simply to the animal; it is a high moral attribute. It is sublime only when it surveys peril and calmly measures its import, so as wisely to meet it. The courage of the warrior is not the blind instinct of the beast which, in sheer recklessness, impinges upon opposition without regarding its force. The courage of a true statesman surveys the perils by which the State is environed, and draws upon its deepest wisdom and upon its strongest will to avoid them. It is the part of a courage that is true and manful, at least to pause and survey what is before you. Here you are, confronting God; who stands in His antagonism to your sin, under the sworn announcement that He will to the last enforce the principles of right and of truth. "Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath, and behold every one that is proud and abase him: then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee." Send forth the flashings of your lightning, and the coals of fire which your vengeance kindles; and if they fall beneath the manifestations of divine majesty and of divine power, I plead with you, by the contrast, to kiss the Son whilst you are in the way with Him, lest you perish when His wrath is kindled but a little.

But I submit this thought, only that I may dismiss it. Allow me, for a moment, to lift you to a higher view, and to appeal to a nobler principle than that of fear. I would like to-day, if I could translate my own poor thought, to speak to that sentiment of honor which lies down in the depths of our nature, and which does sometimes respond to the appeal that is made to it, and thus accomplishes deeds that are generous. My hearer, are you not called, in simple honor, to meet your God in the adjustment of this quarrel? I say nothing of your danger, as God rolls over you His crushing justice and His consuming holiness; but I hold up this law, which is the expression of God's nature, and ask if it ever required of you anything but what was honorable and right for man to do? What notions have you of integrity and of right, of which this law is not the standard and the measure? If you are an offender against

this law, then you are fearfully in the wrong. I would not stand to-day where you stand by your own confession, opposing the rectitude and the beauty and the truth reflected from God's law, though you should purchase the ignominy for me by the tender of all the worlds which God's own power has made. But this is your position. And now God, in His inscrutable wisdom and grace, comes in the Gospel of His Son, and, in perfect consistency with Himself, proposes to adjust this controversy with you, consistently also with your honor and with your self respect. Answer it, not to me, but before the tribunal of your own conscience, in the solitude of your own chamber, before your mid-day meal this day—having first outraged right and truth and honor and fairness, as God expounds them to you in His blessed law—can you honorably dissent from the reconciliation which He proposes in His mercy; and which it is perfectly consistent with His glory to tender, and with your honor to accept? Ye are all honorable men, and I trust ye are so in the depths of your nature as well as in the manifestations of your life; and I come with this appeal, and lay it before your conscience and not before your fear. I invite you in the name of the Lawgiver to a parley in reference to the settlement of the fearful difference betwixt Him and yourselves. When God declares that He can be just and yet justify you; when you can come and lay your sin upon Him who has blotted out the curse for all who will trust in His blood; when you may possess that sense of personal dignity, which a man feels who is an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ: I do make an appeal to the noblest sentiment of the human soul, which even the power of sin has not been able utterly to eradicate. "As though God did beseech you by us, I pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God." Oh! what a joy to stand upon this platform of reconciliation with God—He throwing around you the arms of an affectionate embrace; and you, His dear children, reposing with quietness and dignity upon His bosom forever!

XLI.

THE ATTRACTION OF THE CROSS.

JOHN xii, 32:—"*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*"

From the words of explanation immediately added by the Evangelist, it is plain that our Lord here speaks of His death: "This he said, signifying what death he should die." The key to the expression is found in John iii, 14, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." So far back in the history of God's ancient people, whilst travelling through the wilderness to the Promised Land, was this type revealed of the crucifixion of our Lord. We shall have occasion presently to inquire into the precise import of the language thus prepared a great while ago.

It may be understood as a *prophetic* word, now falling from the lips of Christ—pointing to the enlargement of the Church, by the ingathering of the Gentiles. In this case it hinges on very beautifully with the historical incident [verses 20-24] of "the Greeks, among them that came up to worship at the feast," who desired to "see Jesus." Was it a fortuitous coincidence, or had it a deep providential significance, that, at the moment when He was about to be openly rejected by "his own," to whom He came, these first-fruits of the Gentile world should be found inquiring for Him at the gates of the temple? And we begin to comprehend the enigmatical reply which He sends to them by Andrew and Philip: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He Himself was that grain of wheat, out of whose death should spring "a harvest for eternity." "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains—the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." [Psalm lxxii, 16.] In this dark parable was wrapt up the method in which should be accomplished Isaiah's prediction, "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people—to it shall the Gentiles seek." [Isaiah xi, 10.] In this *predictive*

sense Christ may be understood as saying, "I will draw all men unto me."

Or, without wholly discarding this, we may construe the language as *descriptive*, unfolding the persuasive power of the Gospel. For when the converts shall be multiplied as the drops of the morning dew, "his people shall be *willing* in the day of his power." In the words, "I will *draw* all men unto me," we have sweetly described the nature of that influence by which the Gospel at length "brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." [II Corinthians x, 5] Under this view the declaration connects closely with what is uttered in the thirty-first verse—"Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." In this death upon the cross, the Redeemer "bruises the serpent's head." He breaks the sceptre of his usurped dominion, and strikes off the shackles with which his captives were bound. As a deliverer, Christ appears to cut asunder the fetters of brass in which His people were held, and to *draw* them out of the house of their bondage. And it is pertinent to observe just here, that the original word which is employed suggests the co lateral idea of exertion, or force: not a force putting compulsion upon the free choice of those who come to Him, but in breaking down the obstacles which restrain them in the actings of their choice.

In both these senses combined, the text suggests the theme which is suitable to our sacramental meditations this morning—THE ATTRACTIVE POWER OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST. Let us endeavor to trace the elements of that power by which it draws the soul to Jesus.

1. *The cross expresses, in its sweetest form, the amazing love of God.* The death of Christ is the spectacle of love, which is given to the universe of creatures. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" [John iii, 16] "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." [I John iii, 16.] "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." "Herein is love"—just as though every other exhibition of love was waived out of existence when compared with this—"herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." [Ibid. iv, 9, 10] "But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." [Romans v, 8.] And Peter, speaking of the spirit of prophecy which "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should

follow," declares, "which things the angels desire to look into." [I Peter i, 11, 12.] To all beings, then, in all worlds, through eternity as well as in time, the special disclosure of the divine love is that which is made through the cross. Even in heaven, John "beheld and, lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." [Revelations v, 6.] In the world of glory is preserved the memorial of that sacrificial love which was exhibited upon the cross, and to which all the holy must forever turn in order to know the depth of its tenderness. The proofs of God's goodness are seen in all the contrivances of His wisdom. For it has been well remarked, that nowhere in creation do we trace any organ whose original design is to produce suffering. The pain which is experienced is something wholly aside from the purpose for which it was contrived, and has clearly supervened as the consequence and punishment of sin. But it is not until we come to the love of God in the redemption of a lost world, that He turns out to view the treasures of His infinite heart, and discloses to His creatures that His nature is love. Its utmost reach was never known, until it stooped to the depth of our sin, and gave the cross of a Redeemer to be its measure.

It would enlarge this discourse beyond proportion to enumerate the properties of this love. A simple reference must suffice, that we may appreciate its attractiveness. It is, for example, perfectly *spontaneous* and *original*. "We love him," says John, "because he FIRST loved us." The priority of this love, springing out of the infinite blessedness of the divine nature itself, is one of its most touching features. The human heart responds, with its own fond instinct, to the affection which seeks it out; and it is hard to resist the generosity which appeals to it for the reciprocation which is craved. Should it not turn, with all its wealth of gratitude, to that *first* love which has its seat in the bosom of the great God—the fountain from which all the blessings of providence and grace flow to the creature?

Couple with this absolute freeness, the amazing *condescension* of this love. It stretches forth to beings who are at an infinite remove; whose vast inferiority would seem to sink them even below the level of its notice. It will heighten your conception of this to remember, that in the tri personal subsistence of the Godhead there is infinite scope for the divine affections; so that no internal necessity compels them to rest upon the creature. What a view does it give of the exuberance of this

love, that it should overflow upon beings who could never in themselves aspire to a dignity so exalted! And how amazing that these should be drawn up into the Son, that they may be loved with an affection which glances down from Him to them! "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." [John xvii, 23.]

But this leads us directly to consider the *mercifulness* of this love. Not only is it the free movement of Jehovah's heart, uncaused by worth or merit in the creature, but the very reverse is true. Covered with sin as with a garment, man stands in bitter hostility against Him, resenting His dominion and control. So far from discovering that which should elicit His love, God sees in this guilty rebel only what should repress it within His own bosom. The resources of infinite wisdom and power are required, to burst through the obstacles by which it would appear to be confined; and the channel for its outflow must be dug through the transgression and condemnation of the sinner. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God"—that He should "pass by us and see us polluted in our blood, and that he should say to us when we are in our blood, Live!" Yea, "when I passed by thee and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love: and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness—yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine." [Ezekiel xvi, 6, 8.]

Then, too, this love is not that of *benevolence* simply, but of *complacency*. Not content with showering blessings upon creatures dependent upon His care, it seeks to lift them out of degradation and ruin into the adoption of sons. No longer shivering with fear under the curse they have incurred, they rise with filial reverence into His presence and cry Abba, Father. Integrated into Christ, they stand not in mere subjection under law, but are made in Him kings and priests unto God. It is not simply mercy lifting the sinner out of his guilt; but it is grace, in the fulness of that provision which crowns redemption itself with everlasting glory.

It is a love *eternal* and *unchangeable*. Uncaused by anything seen or foreseen in us, as it is not founded upon our desert, so it is not shaken by the discovery of our defects. Even whilst we are wilted under the consciousness of our demerit, and bewail it in penitence before the throne of grace, still we rise before God in the superb confidence that

all which is so shameful in the believer shall never shake this eternal and inexhaustible love from its hold upon us.

But the tenderest feature, more immediately presented in the text, is that it manifests itself in *the form of sacrifice and of suffering*. We estimate human love by the sacrifices to which it enables. The love of a parent, perhaps the deepest known upon this earth, is evinced in the toil, anxiety and care so willingly endured for the child from the moment of its birth. No sooner does the great Father above put the first-born into our arms, than the self-abnegation begins which no longer thinks of ease and personal indulgence; but which sinks all into the welfare of the off-spring—living only in their life, throwing them more and more into the front until they fill the whole breadth of the canvas, sinking ourselves deeper and deeper into the shade until at last we fall entirely from the view. What pathos then in this love upon the cross! A love that is willing to die for man! We begin now to understand a little better the amazement and perturbation of the Savior's spirit, the great horror of darkness which settles upon His soul, as He passes under the cloud and enters into His passion. It is a love which He must exhibit through death; and a death rendered most bitter from the shame and pain of our guilt, from a full sense of the curse which the law laid upon His sinless, suffering heart. 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him—he hath put him to grief."

My hearers, the cross, as the symbol of this sacrificial love, appeals to all that is tender and affectionate and generous in our nature. And it is only because the sinful heart is the hardest of all the things that are hard upon the earth, that it can be insensible to the pathos of that love which Christ exhibits through His death. Why, the first statement of it, as it fell upon the ear, ought to have moved every sensibility of your nature and melted you down into a gracious reciprocation of its tenderness. That you are able to hear the story from Sabbath to Sabbath—that you are able to resist the pressure of appeal which this redeeming love makes to your gratitude—that you do not spring from these seats and rush to this cross, and clasp this Savior to your bosom with a fervor of devotion which no speech could interpret—it is this which shows the sinner's heart to be harder than the adamant itself. And it is just this suffering love of Christ which is revealed at last to the soul by the Holy Spirit, and which subdues it in submission and penitence at the Savior's feet. No soul was ever conquered for God but by the power of this love. It is not until the scales fall from the eyes which open upon Him who "was wounded for our transgressions and

bruised for our iniquities," that the heart is broken at last by the tenderness and depth of a love which could die that we might live. Then it is, the attraction of the cross is felt; as, by the magnetism of suffering love, we are drawn to Him who hangs upon it.

2. *The cross is a most wonderful exhibition of the divine rectitude.* It thus addresses itself to that sense of justice which lies at the foundation of our whole moral nature. Was there ever a man so vile upon earth who, in his lowest degradation, did not retain a secret reverence for virtue? This conscience which is within us the organ of law—which, by some standard, perfect or imperfect, draws the distinction between the right and the wrong—compels us to see, with greater or less clearness, the beauty which is in the one, and the deformity which is in the other. We may be swept away by our passions, and live in the daily commission of sin; we may be overborne by the fierce temptations of an evil world, and fail in the performance of acknowledged duty; but in that secret chamber where conscience holds its court, there is enshrined a recognition of the right as a thing in itself transcendantly glorious. When, too, God comes in the vindications of His providence, even though they crush us with their ponderous wheels, we rise even in our suffering and acknowledge the righteousness which ordains it all. Who is there, again, that does not pay homage to *principle*, when in its highest form it is exhibited by others. The men of unbending principle, does not society knit to them as the anchors by which it is kept to its moorings? There may be no courtliness in their address, and but little suavity in their speech. These robust men, too stern to deflect upon the right hand or the left, are apt to be rough like the Baptist, and to smite with the edge of their tongue—but wherever you find them on earth, you wrap your trust about them because of their courage and their truth.

But where was there ever such exhibition of rectitude as that made upon the Redeemer's cross? The weight of the injured law was laid entire upon the sufferer there. Though He were a Son, yet was there no abatement of its stern exactions. Precept and penalty alike demanded of this Substitute what was due to each—the full obedience to the one, the full measure of anguish to the other. Not by the breadth of a hair did the law retrench its claims, though it exacted upon Him who "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." Ah, my hearers, it is now not love alone, but righteousness as well: a love which is holy and asserts principles and vindicates right. It is no easy, sentimental affection, one-sided and partial, overbearing truth in its weak

favoritism It is a love which is strong in the support of law, robust and grand—the love of a Being who is "glorious in holiness"—the love of a strong Redeemer who, in His dying, upholds truth that is eternal and immutable. It is a love which addresses itself to the human conscience and reason, not less than to human affections. It speaks not to sentiment only, or to fancy and taste, but to man's intelligence and thought. It appeals to whatever there is of principle in us, to that innate sense of justice which must always respond to the petition of right against the invasions of wrong. It employs a language that goes sounding into the depths of our moral constitution, and lays its claim before our virtue. Its voice needs only to be heard, in order to draw upon all the principles of our nature, and lead us to bow before the majesty of God's holiness and truth.

3. *The cross attracts, because it is the symbol of pardon.* The first need of the sinner is forgiveness. His condition is that of one who is crushed beneath the curse. He needs to be lifted out of this ruin, and to be restored to the divine favor which he has forfeited. The law pursues him with its drawn sword, and there is no safety until he escapes from the Avenger into the city of refuge. What, therefore, is first required is not purity, or holiness, or the power to render future obedience —but forgiveness, that shall blot out the handwriting of the penalty.

There are now but two ways in which pardon can be dispensed to sinners: either in the exercise of simple sovereignty, irrespective of any satisfaction to justice and to law; or upon the ground of a complete attonement for human guilt. I will not pause to show that the former is wholly impracticable—which is indeed the less necessary now, as this has been fully discussed before you in a discourse which is fresh in your memory. But it is important that you should see, in this connection, that such a pardon could never give peace to the conscience, nor silence its dreadful accusations.

In the first place, *no security can be offered of its continuance.* Indeed, the supposition is dishonoring to God, that He can ever act without a sufficient reason: and the conscience can find no contentment in a pardon which reflects upon the integrity of the Lawgiver, and offers no basis on which to rest but the arbitrary exercise of naked will. If God without a reason recedes from the penalty which He has proclaimed, He may equally without a reason see fit to restore it in all its destroying force. If in the putting forth of a bald decree He cancels the word, "the soul that sinneth it shall die," what shall hinder the second thought that recovers the lost word and brings back the curse which He has re-

moved? There can be no guarantee, in such a case, that a will, moving arbitrarily in the one direction, may not just as wantonly swing back in the other direction. As the conscience responds ever to the law of which it is the organ, it can repose only upon a pardon which justice approves, as well as mercy. The ground of its hope must be laid in an atonement, which meets the sense of right as it is found alike in God and in man.

In the second place, *mere amnesty may take away the penalty, but it leaves the sin.* This is its utmost extent. God, in His sovereign pleasure, says, "I will not inflict the doom to which you are justly exposed." But the sin, which brought us under that doom, remains as before with all its disturbing power: and the conscience is compelled to pronounce the sentence of condemnation upon the guilt which it perceives. But the cross is the symbol of pardon which has been secured through the law itself. It declares the sin to be taken away—"The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." Out of this free justification in the Gospel spring the necessity and assurance of our sanctification, when we shall be delivered from the dominion of sin, and finally from its presence and being. Hence the attraction of the cross; "it speaks of pardon bought with blood"—it reveals "God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" [II Cor. v, 19]—it "purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God" [Hebrews ix, 14]—in the righteousness it affords, it yields to the soul a sense of complete acceptance with God as a reconciled Father.

4. *The cross, in presenting a human Savior, gives a human pulse to our religion.* Ah, the cross! it means death—the suffering before death, and which ends in death! Can God die? Who is it, then, that hangs and bleeds upon this tree? who is it that is slain under the law in the sinner's stead, and of whom you predicate that which cannot be affirmed of a being who is simply divine? You have the answer: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, *made of a woman,* made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" [Gal. iv, 4] He that hangs upon the tree is "the woman's seed." It is He "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men—and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." [Philippians ii, 6 9] This cross, therefore, lifts up before our eyes the GOD MAN—the eternal Son who took upon him the nature which had sinned, and suffered the curse

which the transgressor must have borne. It is the incarnate Redeemer, our "Elder Brother," who was "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh," and who in turn makes us "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh." What but this lies at the foundation of the doctrine of our resurrection? For if we are the members of Christ's body, it is as impossible for us as for Him that we should be "holden of death." [Acts ii, 24] In the first-fruit, the grave has potentially yielded up all its dead. "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." [I Thessalonians iv, 14] Must not the risen body of Jesus, in heaven, draw up to itself the scattered members which lie in a thousand tombs?

Oh! the comfort, the comfort to us in a religion which beats with a *human*, as well as with a divine, pulse! And the cross—is it not the bridge thrown over the great chasm of sin and death, by which we pass over to the land of life and love beyond? And when we pray, have we not boldness at the throne of grace, through the "High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities?" In our human nature we require a religion which is essential human, to take up this human trust, and engage these human affections, within us. It is in the incarnate Christ, working out our redemption upon the cross, we find the point of unition with the everlasting Father who is beyond.

5. *The cross is intimately associated with the throne, and this "lifting up" has a double meaning which we must not break.* Did you never pause upon the form of the expression, "I, if I be LIFTED UP?" Let us not read God's blessed Book with slovenly haste, without perceiving the pregnancy of its hidden meaning. How wonderfully a word will carry a thought upon its surface—but as you take off its outer covering, then there lies within it a mystery that is deeper and grander; and there comes out of it a birth after birth of most divine truth! "If I be LIFTED UP." Ah, it is not only the "lifting up" upon the cross—but there is also the "lifting up" of Christ upon the throne of His glory.

Most strongly in confirmation of this, the word, here employed by Christ of His death, is the word used almost technically by the Holy Spirit to denote the Savior's exaltation to His reward. It is most impressive in the original to those who are able to consult it. Take as examples the following passages. In Acts ii, 33, Peter says, "Therefore being by the right hand of God *exalted*" (lifted up): in Acts v, 31, "Him hath God *exalted* (lifted up) with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior:" and in Philippians ii, 9, "Wherefore God hath also highly exalted him (lifted him up), and given him a name which is above every name." This last testimony is the more pertinent, because

the exaltation is put in immediate connection with the humiliation of the cross, as effect and cause.

Is it not because the two "liftings up" were always blended in His thought, that our Lord always speaks of His sufferings as His glory? In the seventeenth of John, just as He enters within the edge of His great anguish, He opens His priestly prayer with the words, "Father, the hour is come—glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." In the very language which in the context is given to the inquiring Greeks, our Lord prefaces His reply by saying, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified;" and instantly adds the parable of the "corn of wheat," emblematic of His death. He leaps by a bound from the cross to the crown. In the very entrance upon the sufferings, He springs over the gloom and the anguish, and takes hold upon the glory in which they should end. Indeed the connection between the two is strictly logical. It was on the cross the crown was secured; His right as Mediator to sit at the Father's right hand was purchased by that agony. "Ought not Christ," said He after His resurrection, "to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory." [Luke xxiv, 26.] And Peter puts the two together in their necessary sequence, "Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." [I Peter i, 11.]

Christ speaks, then, of "drawing all men unto him," because the "lifting up" upon the cross procures the "lifting up" upon His throne. He asserts the royal grace which He will Himself administer through the Holy Ghost: who, as the "Spirit of Christ," "taking the things of Christ and showing them unto us," will effectually draw all the redeemed to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

In gathering the threads of this discourse into its conclusion, I desire rapidly to emphasize the connection between the "lifting up" and the "drawing. There are just three points to be designated.

The first is, that *Jesus must be lifted up, in order to be seen as the alone object of our faith.* The connection is simply this, that Christ must be seen by those whom He draws; therefore He is lifted up. It is with Him as with the typical serpent of brass; which must be raised aloft upon a pole, to be seen through the whole encampment of Israel. Thus, Christ is lifted up in the preaching of the Gospel. The office of the pulpit is only testimonial. Like the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan, it simply points to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the

sins of the world." He is lifted up in this Ordinance of the Supper which we are about to celebrate. It was instituted as a memorial. What we do here, is to commemorate. Under simple but expressive symbols, we see His body broken and His blood poured forth. In these sacramental actions, we do spiritually eat His flesh and drink His blood, that His life may abide in us.

The second thought is, that *Christ draws us to Himself* FIRST *upon the cross.* There it is that our saving knowledge of Him begins. If drawn to Him at all, we are drawn to Him just there. Until we see Him on the tree, made a curse for us, He is no Savior to us. It is not enough to find Christ in the history, nor in the doctrine, nor in the sermon, nor in the sacrament, unless we find Him upon the cross. All else is but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, until we have been drawn to Christ upon the cross. When the eye is opened to behold Him as the "propitiation for *our* sins"—when we accept Him in the very act of "obtaining eternal redemption for us"—then shall the promises be fulfilled to us, in the drawing of our souls to Him.

The third thought is, that, *if drawn to Christ upon the cross, we shall surely be drawn to Him upon the throne.* If we share in His humiliation, we shall share also in His glory. If we have fellowship with Him in His sufferings, we have fellowship likewise in the power of His resurrection. He who ascended from the cross to the throne, must needs draw His people who have wept in penitence before the one, to enjoy the reward of the other. "I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." [John xiv, 2, 3.] The great magnet by which a lost world is drawn to God, is the Savior's cross. Oh! the joy to us as we gather to day around this table, beholding in these symbols Christ lifted up on the cross for us! It is the sure pledge that we shall be drawn by the power of the same love to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven. "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." [Matthew xix, 28.]

The whole of this discourse may be condensed into a single sentence: that the power by which we are won to God is the power of His love, through His suffering Son, applied by His royal power through the Holy Ghost—ending at last in sharing with Christ the glory of the upper kingdom. It has been well said, "The Father draws by the Son who draws:" to which it might be added, And the Son draws through the

Holy Ghost who draws. Thus we have the co-ordination of all the Persons of the adorable Godhead in this drawing, in the equal exhibition of their common love to lost man through the cross of Jesus Christ.

Whatever then, my brethren, may be the confessions which you shall make at this table to day, and however painful your consciousness of defect before God, yet this mighty drawing will overcome all the obstacles which lie between this communion board and the communion of the saints in glory. Trust this Redeemer with a full and honorable confidence, and knit yourselves to His service with a consecration that shall be without reserve. Oh! blessed Jesus, whithersoever thou goest, and wherever thou shalt be through all eternity, we know that thou wilt draw us ever to thyself. Through all temptations, over all the power of the world to seduce, over the force of the great adversary, over all this indwelling sin, thou wilt bring us at last to sit down with thee in thy kingdom forever. "The Lamb in the midst of the throne"—this is the pledge given to our faith to day, that the redeeming Savior, who has ascended above all heavens, will continue to draw us with His love, until we too shall walk the streets of the heavenly city, clothed in "the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints." In the Lord's pavilion here, and sitting beneath the banner of His love, in your very mourning rejoice that the cross will never cease its attraction for you, until it has drawn you into the presence of the Throne.

XLII.

WORLDLY WISDOM OPPOSED TO THE GOSPEL.

I CORINTHIANS i, 26:—"*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.*"

IBID. iii, 18:—"*If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.*"

More than twenty years ago this question was propounded to me by an intelligent and pious friend: "Why is it that Christianity gains such little hold upon the influential minds of the country? I go," says he, "through our towns and villages, and, with a few distinguished exceptions, our civilians, our magistrates, our legislators, our judges and our physicians, are not enrolled among the followers of Jesus. I turn from the world to the Church, and find this composed of good, excellent people, but not, for the most part, distinguished by their attainments in knowledge, by professional eminence of any sort, or by general position in society" As I did not immediately answer this inquiry, so well suited to excite earnest thought, he resumed and, with a degree of vehemence, added, "Sir, you are bound to explain to me this fact, which is the opprobrium of Christianity. As a religious teacher, you profess to know the overwhelming evidence by which its claims are supported, and to understand the springs of human conduct. If a Hindoo should alight upon our shores, what would he think of our religion in view of this fact, that so few of the educated and controlling minds of the country are brought under its power?" I finally arrested this impetuous discourse by laying my hand upon the knee of my friend and saying to him, "Brother, do you not remember, when the deputation went from the Baptist to Christ, asking, 'Art thou he that should come?' the answer was given, 'Go and tell John what things ye do see and hear'—ending in that grand climax, 'And to the poor the gospel is preached.' And do you not remember that sublime prayer of our Lord recorded in the eleventh of Matthew, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and

earth; because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes?'"

Nevertheless, my hearers, the fact is most astounding; and I fear that the proofs of it are just as melancholy as they are full. Why, according to the allegation of my friend, look out upon the composition of our churches and see how few of this special class are embraced within them. It is true that in every age the loftiest minds have been subdued by the power of the cross; as if to show that no reach of intellect could possibly lift one above the scope of its influence. It is true, that ever since the promulgation of Christianity, the loftiest intellects of the world, and those by whom public opinion and public morals have always been controlled, have been predominantly religious. It is true, that no science prosecuted upon the earth has enlisted so many minds, and those of the loftiest reach, in its study, as the science of theology. These facts are not to be pretermitted; but rather to be proclaimed, in abatement of the taunt which is sometimes thrown upon us by the scoffer—yes, and in abatement also of the confession which, with sorrowful tones, even the Church makes at the feet of her Master. Nay, descending from this sphere which is purely religious, it would not be difficult to show that nothing great has ever been done upon this earth except under the power of faith, in its comprehensive and generic sense. No hero ever became such, save as he lifted himself above the present, projected himself into the future, and quietly waited in the patience of his soul for the approving verdict of posterity. Not until mighty principles have been adopted, and faith has been able to anticipate the future, and draw it up to its breast, was there ever a great character formed, or were great deeds ever wrought. All this is highly symbolic. It points the wise and the great and the noble of the earth to a faith which moves upon a far higher range, and takes hold of the august realities of eternity and of God. It seems to me to involve a reproach, that the faith which is thus signalized within the earthly sphere, should not beat its wing and ascend to a sphere that is higher and heavenly; that the strong flight of these mighty men should be arrested upon the mountain tops of the earth, and that they do not soar until at last they perch upon the stars.

Nevertheless, after all these abatements we must come back to the acknowledgement, painful as it is, that going through any community sufficiently large, and gathering together the wise and the great and the noble, and then segregating those who have given in their adhesion to the Lord Jesus Christ, you have scarcely made a breach upon their ranks.

Then, too, just see how upon either side of Christianity, upon the

right hand and upon the left, spring up competitive systems which counterfeit her presence, put on her aspect, and, upon the one side or upon the other side, draw to their embrace those who should be imbued with the devotional spirit of the true Gospel. There is rationalism, which, in its Protœan shapes, provides for the religious sentiment in our nature and seeks to satisfy its unsearchable craving, but without offering any scandal to human reason—providing a religion that shall be without an altar and without a priest, without a sacrifice and without a mystery—whose vaunt it is that it draws down the incomprehensible to the level of human reason, and subjects the infinite to the manipulations of the finite. The worst errors which have desolated society, have their origin in the reaction of strong intellects struggling against the spirituality and power of the truth as it resides in the Gospel of the Son of God. On the other hand, there is ritualism with its imposing forms and solemn ceremonies, with its pictorial emblems of every sort appealing to imagination and to sense, with its postures and its genuflexions, and its "bodily exercise" of every sort, which "profiteth little." Thus, in all the ages, is Christianity crucified between the two thieves; reproducing, in her progressive history, the experience of the Master, as upon Calvary He hung between the thief upon this side and the thief upon the other, and heard their railings.

If you wish further evidence, look upon the literature of what is called a Christian people, and see to what little extent that literature is saturated with the spirit and with the principles of the Gospel. In contrast, if you take up Pagan literature, it is pervaded through and through with Pagan theology. The intervention of the gods constitutes the larger part of the machinery in their epics—so much so, that those ancient classics are to this day the urn in which the ashes of Pagan mythology are treasured. But when were themes ever presented like those of the Gospel, to enlist the æsthetic sentiment in man and draw upon the deepest poetry of his nature? What form did poetry ever throw upon its page, or the pencil ever depict upon the canvas, like that of Him who, lowly and harmless, went about doing good and dispensing His charities to the just and to the unjust? When was there ever pathos like that which you find in the sacrificial love of the Son of God; when, as a substitute for a doomed world, upon the altar of the universe He offered Himself a propitiatory sacrifice for human sin and guilt? What grander themes for the inspiration of true genius are there, than those works of power by which Christ proved Himself to be the Son of God and established His mission as one sent of the Father—blending all the

glories of the Deity with the meekness and humility of the man, in the mystery of His incarnation?

If you sink to a plane more level to human apprehension, what object should more draw upon human imagination than a good man feeling within him the pulses of a spiritual and divine life, bearing himself bravely under the pressure of human misfortune and trial, and encountering at the last the awful mystery of death without fear, and in the midst of nature's dissolution stretching out the hand of his faith and laying hold upon the immortal prizes amidst the splendid realities of the eternal world? And yet, and yet, with the exception of a few lyrics composed by the devout as an expression of their worship, where, in all the literature of a Christian age and a Christian people, do you find the poems and the songs penetrated through and through with the spirit of Christianity, and breathing out the aroma of grace?

If you turn from belles lettres to philosophy—ah! whilst a true philosophy and a correct science will always show you the path of God in nature, and, with reverent finger, will point to the foot-prints of His march—yet how many of the schools of philosophy and of science, which most challenge the attention and admiration of mankind, have combined in a fearful conspiracy to push God out of His universe, and substitute in the place of Him who sits with His intelligence and will upon the throne of empire, a mere naked impersonal force—and construe the God who built the universe into the mere spring of the mysterious energies and processes of nature! I fear the proof is sufficient, that the wise and the great and the noble are not found followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."

There must be a solution of this fact; and the solution which comprehends every other, is that "carnal mind which is enmity against God, which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." How mournfully the words fall upon the ear, "They do not like to retain God in their knowledge!" And how solemn the indictment of the Apostle in the first of Romans, when he speaks of our apostate race as turning away from the living God to the worship of beasts and of birds and of reptiles and of the inanimate statues which their own hands have made! But whilst this comprehensive reason covers the entire case, there must be proximate reasons which shall still more minutely explain it. For this "carnal mind which is enmity against God" is the common characteristic of the race, exhibited as much by the obscure as by

the wise and mighty, whilst its operation must be different in the experience of these two extremes. How, then, can we proximately explain the melancholy fact which the text announces?

Obviously, in the first place, the text gives the reason: "Not many wise men atter the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are *called.*' Now, there are two calls. There is an outward call which the word addresses to the ear and, through the ear, to the understanding, to the reason and to the conscience—that call which the word, wherever it is heard upon the earth, conveys to men learned and unlearned, ignorant and wise, pious and sinful. Then there is the effectual call of God's own Spirit, when He takes this truth as it lies in the letter of Scripture and carries it with its own power to the conscience and to the heart; when, in the language of this same Apostle, "the powers of the world to come" are made to bear in all their majesty upon the human soul, and men are compelled to tremble under an apprehension of their sinfulness, of their guilt, of their helplessness and of their ruin. In this sense we understand the text, "not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."

I think history teaches that no great change ever revolutionized earth which did not work up from the bottom; and wherever this order is reversed and revolution begins from the top, the changes are found to be superficial and transient. But when the world passes through its permanent changes and society finds itself crystalizing into new and established forms, I think all history will show that it is when the masses are impregnated with living principles, and rise up in their solemn assertion, and put the stamp of their thought and of their will upon society and the world. It would, therefore, be in precise harmony with this law if God, in the outworking of His kingdom, should rather regard the obscure and the lowly than the wise and the noble upon the earth.

But whatever stress be laid on this analogy, God plainly declares in His holy Word that, as He is the sole author of the grace and the sole founder of the kingdom, so, throughout the boundless eternity in which that kingdom is to display its trophies, He and He alone shall wear the glory. Therefore He causes the Gospel to work its way to dominion and empire under the mightiest human disadvantages. It is not His policy that the wise and the great of the earth shall bring the contrivances of their wisdom, and the energy of their will, and the splendor of their power, to push forward the chariot of this conquerer, as it rolls bickering upon its way to final triumph and to glory. This militant church of His must contend against all odds, against the intellect, the

wisdom and the power of earth. God makes His glory the more conspicuous, by achieving these triumphs of His through means essentially impotent and weak.

My brethren, it is right that He who wrought out the whole plan, who stepped forth from the bosom of the Father and bare the load of a world's guilt and shame—who, unaided and alone, trod the wine-press of His Father's wrath—should alone bear the glory of the achievement, when all the kingdoms of the world shall bow to the authority of His name, and He shall be worshipped from the rising to the going down of the sun. He will never allow, even in heaven, the loftiest of the redeemed to say anything before the throne except "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory." If I were allowed to address an assembly of earth's magnates—and there are moments when all other thoughts concentrate into the burning wish that I could bring the senators and the nobles, the governors and the kings, the judges and the magistrates of the earth in one vast congress—I would point them to the loss which they experience, if these earthly prizes are accepted in compensation for the prizes which God holds out to them from above. Ah! the melancholiness of the thought, that He whose ways are not as our ways, and who seeth not as man seeth, should, in His august sovereignty, pass over the heads of the high and the noble, and leave them wrapped up in their self-complacency and pride, to hug the emblems of earthly power and of earthly glory in satisfying a sickly ambition—that He who, in the election of that sovereign will which never allows itself to be disputed, should pass over the great ones of the earth, and exalt the obscure and the ignorant and the base to principalities and powers in the inheritance above! "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." [I Corinthians i, 27-29.]

My hearers, if any of you are among the great and noble, and feel contented with the portion that you have in this world, I say to you, you are welcome to the prize that you hold in your grasp. But by and by there will be a sigh of regret, when, in that world which is after all the only world which can be called the world of life, you find yourselves stripped of these honors, and live in the nakedness of your desolation forever.

But let us seek a little lower into the proximate causes of this tremen-

dous fact. The great and the noble of the earth *are usually offended with the levelling character of the Gospel.* Every grade in society has its own temptation and vice. The poor and the illiterate, how often they harbor festering thoughts of envy and jealousy towards those more favored than themselves; breaking out ever and anon, in history, into that open agrarianism which has been the rock upon which all governments in the past have foundered. And then the great and the distinguished, how are they tempted to a haughty pride, which looks down, with lordly contempt upon those beneath them in life. And thus the friction continues between the two classes, deepening at length into irritation and permanent estrangement; until the explosive forces burst the whole fabric of society asunder! Now the Gospel is, like death, the greatest of all levellers. It frowns indignantly away the artificial distinctions of life. It speaks to men everywhere simply as sinners, puts them all under the same condemnation, charges upon all the same guilt, pronounces upon all the same sentence of helplessness and ruin; and holds up before all classes, without distinction, one living Redeemer, and declares that only through the blood of that one sacrifice can there be remission of sin to any. It demands of high and low, rich and poor, great and obscure, the same personal faith, the same hearty and trustful acceptance of this redeeming work of a Savior. And now, because men have reached to greatness, and with the permission of Providence, as well as through the energy of their own intellect and will, have secured places of power and of trust—when you come to these men and level them down to this one platform, which regards them only as sinners, and makes no distinction betwixt this man and that man in reference to the terms which are proposed, then is the offense of the cross felt. The same facts are presented to all, the same salvation is presented to all, and the same faith is exacted of all. The great man sees that, in the matter of personal salvation, he has no advantage over the peasant; and that the most humble of the race can exercise equally with himself the same confiding trust in this all-sufficient Redeemer. Here, then, is one cause of the mournful fact revealed in the text.

Again, *there is the preoccupation with great and solemn trusts,* which sinful human nature perverts into a form of religion itself. There is this difference between mental and corporeal labor: that the former is attended with little leisure. The artisan, who works from the rising of the sun to its setting, lays down at length his tools and has entire vacation of mind. But the professional man, who lives through the toil of his brain—ah! when that busy machinery has been put to work, long

after its solid task is done, the busy wheels will drive on still with their idle whirl, and all the force of will cannot stop the ceaseless ticking of that restless mind, which *will* think when you would put it to sleep. But this is only the outside of the view we would present. The great and the noble occupy high and solemn trusts before men. The legislator, who sits in the senate chamber enacting statutes for the realm; the magistrate, who takes this law and enforces it upon the obedience of the subject and the citizen; the judge upon the bench, clothed in the spotless ermine which is the emblem of the purity of the law which he expounds; and the barrister, who pleads with so much eloquence the great causes committed to his care: all these constitute a species of priesthood upon the earth. Next to the Church of God, where the priest, in fine linen, ministers at the altar of Jehovah and touches reverently those sacraments which pictorially represent the dying love of the crucified Redeemer, there is no place so holy upon the earth as a court of justice, upon which God throws the shadow of His eternal justice, and where the majesty of law is represented. It is not perhaps strange that men invested with these high trusts should be tempted to feel that these are for them a sufficient religion; that this is priesthood enough, and that they need not go into the temple of the Lord and pay their vows at the altar of sacrifice.

Then there is the physician, searching through all nature for those remedial agents which God, in His mercy, has planted upon every hillside to heal the sicknesses of man; who, like the good Samaritan, goes from chamber to chamber, soothing the pains of the sufferer and raising from the dust of death those who are still to walk the paths of life; only less to be reverenced than if, with apostolic gift, he could heal by the passing of his shadow. And the merchant and the banker, in their retired offices, touching with delicate skill those electric wires that run through all commerce, and handling those mysterious yet operative laws which it is the province of our political economy to unfold. Great men, wise in their generation and noble in their characteristics, earth loves to do them honor. But in the occupation of these trusts, with all society hanging upon their wisdom and paying deference to their skill, alas! they forget God. I wonder often, as I see the intellectual and the gifted in this great city jostling each other upon the highway, whether they are penetrated with the solemnity of their calling. There is with many a dim consciousness of it; which tempts them to put up these high trusts before God, and in the fulfilment of these to pacify the clamors of conscience, and expect a great reward in the presence of the throne.

Above all, *the wise and the gifted turn away from the supernatural in Christianity.* I will not go into the deeper mysteries of the Gospel, such as the incarnation, or the Trinity, or the wonderful operations of the unseen Spirit in providence and in grace. But here is the supernatural as it lies in the experience of the Christian, who is divinely enlightened by the Holy Ghost to see the truth as it lies in Scripture; who feels the reality of that faith which he reposes upon a divine testimony; who experiences the power of the spiritual life communicated to him in the new birth; and rejoices in the witness of the Holy Spirit, bearing testimony that he is passed from death to life and made an heir of glory. Now when experimental religion throws up that broad front before the world, men turn away from it; and just because they cannot compass any one portion of this vast system, with all the mortification that comes from a sense of defeat, put the whole system to scorn.

See how it works. Proceeding upon the fundamental maxim that they will accept nothing which they do not understand, they absolutely postpone the Gospel as a practical scheme, so that it is never reached. The very instant this Gospel bears with pungency upon the conscience, there, upon the threshold of the temple, lie these awful mysteries which reason is incompetent to resolve; and because they cannot be brought within its scope, they turn away from it as a system to be rejected. The whole spirit and attitude of such a mind is one of rebellion against the authority of God. Why, my hearers, it is the sinner who is challenged, and not God. It is the sinner who stands under indictment before the court. It is the sinner against whom the law brings its tremendous accusation of guilt. God, clothed with all the majesty of a judge, sits upon the throne of justice and declares "The soul that sinneth it shall die." How strange and grotesque the perversion, when that condemned culprit—who is there before the eye of the law to answer for high crimes and misdemeanors, upon the edge of his own ruin, soon to be cast from God's presence and from the glory of His power forever—reverses the position of all the parties, undertaking, with his wisdom and with his will, to interrogate God and challenge his attributes! The whole attitude is one of insurrection against authority and rebellion against empire.

See, too, how this demand altogether changes the terms upon which salvation is proposed to our race—"Believe, and thou shalt be saved," and the sinner says, "I will believe what I can understand." Oh! my hearers, forgive the language if it seem to have too rough an edge; but must God strip Himself to your gaze? Must He lay down His awfulness, that you may go around Him and measure His proportions? Must

He sink His infinity into the measure of your finiteness? Must He, who fills immensity with His presence and whose power creates these myriads of worlds, come down to the level of your apprehension, so that you shall disallow and discard Him, unless He shall explain the mystery of His being and the mystery of His love? Why, it is the supernatural in the Gospel which is its glory. And you ask that this Gospel shall be divested of its very glory, in order that, thus diminished, you may put into the vial of your thought and cork it up. When this Gospel, with all its proud mysteries, has been completely compassed, then you will condescend to obey God, to accept His love, and to be saved through the infinite riches of His grace. It is hard sometimes to repress the language of satire; and yet God knows I speak it mournfully to you to day. My hearer, the audacity of the devil may be greater than any to which human pride may ever reach; but I question whether the devil was ever guilty of the superlative folly of looking down on God. He knows too much. He may throw himself with mad defiance against the will of God; but he knows too much of the august majesty of that Being ever to think of Him in the way of condescension. The marvel of all marvels in this world of wonders is the blindness and infatuation of a worm who lives to-day and dies to-morrow—who, with inexpressible toil, feels his way over the truth as he finds it in nature and in providence—treating the great God in whom he lives and moves and has his being as though He were beneath the condescension of his notice—subjecting that God to the interrogatories of his scepticism, demanding that He shall be stripped of His glorious power, before He will be embraced with human affection.

Various emotions possess one in the consideration of a subject like this: surprise at what is so strange, indignation against what is so unjust, and amazing pity at what is so short-sighted. Why, if there be a man on this globe who is more bound than any other to stretch out his right hand in amity with God, who ought beyond his fellows to step right out of his sins and lay them upon his Redeemer and throw his affections around His cross and around His person, it ought to be the man to whom God has given intelligence and strength. Your poor imbeciles, who totter and fall in the feeblest exercise of their reason, may be pitied, if they cannot be excused, should they permit this glorious Gospel to go by default. But by so much as it has pleased God to invest you with the high attribute of intelligence, I insist that you are bound, by this very prerogative of reason, to recognize the God who speaks to you, and

to respond to the throbbings of His love. I begin with the initial consideration of Dr. Chalmers, possibly there may be a God. The very suggestion is crowded with responsibility. Then you are bound to follow upon the hint, searching through and through whether a God exists; and if He does, then rests upon you the obligation to know what His character is, and in what personal relations you stand to Him. Possibly, my hearers, He has given a revelation. Then are you bound to examine its credentials. This is the book. Let me hold it up before you. It is the only book, the only Scriptures; God's book, God's writings. It comes to you and to me with an imperative challenge, as from the mind of God, and revealing His will and grace. It challenges your attention. You have no right to suffer that book to go by default. It may not be put upon the shelf to be covered with the dust of time. Examine its credentials; and if you admit the book upon those credentials, then are you bound, upon the faith of its inspiration, to submit your reason, your conscience, your will to its teachings. Reject it at the last, if you will; but it ought not to be done by any man who claims, by his intelligence and thought, to be ranked among the wise and the noble of the earth, until it has been fairly and candidly examined; and with a fair and honest inquiry into its import and credentials, I for one would be willing to leave the result. Oh! that the wise would take this scandal off from Christianity, and not leave the reproach of all the ages to rest upon it—that they would accept this Gospel, and find it as precious to their hearts as it is to the obscure and to the lowly!

But there are many in the world who are not wise nor noble nor mighty, and who yet spurn this Gospel. What shall I say to such? I speak the literal truth, when I tell you that the vast majority of our race sadly grind their way through life, and feel the terrible friction at every stage—wretchedly poor, getting little out of the world either in the way of enjoyment or of honor. They pass through life experiencing only the pressure of its cares and its griefs, and know nothing of its rewards, its consolations or its joys. I must say to you, if you are represented in this language, that you serve an unjust and a hard master, and that your wages are exceedingly scant. Why the very least the devil should do, is to bring all the kingdoms of this world before you, as he did before the Master, and offer you these as his splendid prize, if you will bow down and serve him. But when you serve him only for a crust of bread, I must say that you sell cheap. Ah! revolve the matter. Bring up the case again for adjudication. Put the claims of the one against the claims of the other, and see if it be wise to get all that

this world ean afford and lose your soul—how much less to lose the soul and get nothing out of the world—to feel the bite of its care, the sting of its sorrow, the everlasting pressure of want and suffering, and then to pass out of the world and lose the next. Surely "godliness is profitable in all things having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

XLIII.

CHRIST, THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

JOHN xi. 25, 26:—"*Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*"

A romantic interest invests this entire chapter, illustrating, as it does, the completeness of our Lord's humanity. All the sympathies and affections of the human soul are here beautifully disclosed. He loved the family at Bethany; in His absence from that little circle, His heart yearns over the couch of His sick friend, and He prolongs that absence, against the impulses of His human heart, in order that He might the more conspicuously reveal the glory of God through his resurrection. And then those human tears, extorted by affection and sympathy, in the face of His own immediate purpose to turn that sorrow into joy! It is not possible that we shall go down into the spring of those tears, as contemplating the death of Lazarus and the grief of the weeping sister, He saw the seal of condemnation which the law had placed upon a guilty race; and, as about to enter into His own anguish, He stands face to face with that very death through which He was to accomplish the world's redemption.

But I draw your attention this morning to the colloquy with Martha. He promises a resurrection. Her faith embraces it as future. "Thy brother shall rise again." "I know that he shall rise again, in the resurrection at the last day." And then the Master brings the great truth home to her heart, in all its present comfort: "I *am* the resurrection, and the life." "In me, Martha, that good which you contemplate as future, is brought home as an immediate and present reality." It is the key idea of the whole narrative—the present comfort which we experience, in apprehending the Lord Jesus Christ as the resurrection and the life. In what sense is this true? Of these two words, the resurrection and the life, the latter is altogether the most emphatic. Christ is

the resurrection, because He is the life. Let us endeavor to trace these related expressions, to show the connection between them.

1. *Christ is pre-eminently the life, because, as the Creator, He originally bestowed it.* Whatever be the mystery of the Trinity, we know certainly from the Scriptures that He who is called Christ, the eternal Word that was with God and that was God, is the efficient Creator of all life. Hence, in the third and fourth verses of the first chapter of John's Gospel, you have the essential life of Christ presented as the foundation of His creative acts. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men." So, if you turn to the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Colossians, you find that, as "the image of the invisible God," He is presented not only as the Creator, but as the Preserver of all things: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Now upon this fundamental truth, that Christ having within Himself, as the eternal Word, essential life, and, as the original Creator, bestowing that life, is founded all His after work as He is the Redeemer. For certainly, if the life which was originally communicated in creation should by any possibility be forfeited, who ought to be the restorer of it except the very being who first bestowed it? And so the eternal Word—who, just because He was the life, created all things, so that nothing was made except as it was made by Him—as the Redeemer recovers the life which man has forfeited and, by redeeming love, restores it. See, then, the connection between the resurrection and the life. Jesus Christ, as the original Creator, is pre-eminently the life; in the first instance bestowing it, and then afterwards recovering it and communicating it through grace to His people.

2. *The Lord Jesus Christ is the life, because, as Redeemer, He cancels the curse which the law has pronounced against the transgressor.* Man at his first creation was put under the law—not in the first instance created, and then by a second act of sovereign power supervening upon the first, brought under subjection to authority and law—but in the creation itself, in the very nature with which he is endowed, he is subsisting under the dominion of law; and when you define his nature, you define it by terms which distinctly show his relation both to government and to law. Now, my hearers, under this law the whole life of the

creature was pledged to obedience, in all the powers with which he was originally endowed. The law protects itself against the possibility of transgression by taking its lien upon that very life which is thus pledged to it. All that the word life implies, as enjoyed by the being whom God creates under the law, is pledged and held under the penalty; and, of course, is instantly, upon transgression, forfeited. This, then, is our condition since the fall: our whole life, with all that the term includes, is under forfeiture to the curse. The Lord Jesus comes and takes our place as a true and proper substitute, goes down for us into the depths of that curse, endures the penalty in our behalf, cancels the condemnation, and thus recovers the life which was lost. Through the perfect obedience which He renders to the law, offering His soul a sacrifice for sin, He has bought back the life which the law covers with its mortgage; which is henceforward held by Him under strictly legal guarantees.

Oh! that our faith could perfectly apprehend the idea and hold it in its grasp; that all those principles of law, which enter into the penalty and pronounce the condemnation of the sinner, enter also into the believer's security and pledge to him eternal life. Says the Apostle, in the sixth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, "Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" Christ, the Substitute for the sinner, enduring the penalty on his behalf, recovers the forfeiture and ever afterwards holds the life under a guaranty that it shall never again be assailed. This life which Christ recovers and holds, He holds as the Trustee and Representative of His people. Insomuch that, when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and become united by faith with Him, the life is *ours* just as truly as it is His. Thus it is, "our life is hid with Christ in God: and when Christ who is our life shall appear, there shall we also appear with him in glory." [Colossians iii, 3, 4.] It is easy, then, to see how, as our Trustee and Head, He should be the resurrection and the life. For, obviously, if death includes the dissolution of the body, the life which has been recovered by Christ must include the restoration of that body from corruption and decay. If, when Christ comes and annuls the curse, and replaces the death with the life which has been forfeited—unquestionably the one must, at least, be co-extensive with the other, and include the body as well as the soul. Because, then, as Redeemer no less than as Creator, Christ is the life, therefore is He also the resurrection; and so with emphasis He puts the related terms together.

3. *Christ Jesus is the resurrection and the life, because, in His con-*

flict with death, He has actually abolished it. It no longer exists as to Him or as to His people. Having, as Redeemer, removed entirely the ground of condemnation, He then, as Restorer, enters into this grapple with death itself; comes for a little period under subjection to it; experiences the humiliation, the shame and the pain of it; and then, in the morning of the third day, unseals the grave, rises triumphantly from the tomb, not only for Himself, but for His people whom He has redeemed and whom He distinctly represents. I think we can now a little understand that great horror of soul, which the Lord Jesus Christ experienced when He entered into His passion. The death which He was to endure was penal. It was to come to Him, as it will never come to us, as a curse. All, therefore, that death has in it to shock the sensibilities and alarm the fears, all that instinctive recoil from his approach as a last enemy, all the terror with which he is ever able to inspire the living, and which you and I, if we are among the saved, are perfectly spared—the whole of it, in all of its awfulness, rested upon the human spirit of our Lord. He died under the Father's judicial displeasure, under the anathema of the law. How was it possible for Him not to feel the perturbation and amazement of soul, which He so often expresses, as He enters into this last conflict with death? But He has in that completely triumphed. He has not only redeemed us, but He has subdued death. He went into the very dominion of death. There, in His solitary grave, He grapples with this fierce enemy of man, slays him with His power, abolishes him forever and brings life and immortality to light through His own glorious resurrection. Therefore, in prophecy, He exclaims, "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction" [Hosea xiii, 14]; and He signalizes His triumph when at the last He exclaims, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." [Revelation i, 18.] "It was not possible that he should be holden of it." All the bands by which He was held in the grave were burst by His divine power, and He rises in His victory triumphant over the tomb. Thus, my hearers, because Jesus Christ, in this last personal conflict with death, has entirely destroyed it, He is able to say, "I am the resurrection and the life."

We may from the Scriptures assign many reasons why the believer should yield up his body to the grave It is right that, in the very bosom of His grace, God should disclose His awful holiness, and, in the act of saving a soul from death, reveal His intense hatred of sin. He therefore leaves upon the person of the believer, until the last is seen

of him upon earth, a sign of His opposition to all the sin that is found in him. It is right, nay it is needful, if this life is strictly a life of faith and probation, a probation of grace if it be not a probation of law, that God should put no visible difference between the righteous and the wicked as long as we see them in this world; but should reserve the discrimination for the last day, when they shall be gathered before His bar. Therefore He suffers the righteous no less than the wicked to experience the dissolution of the body and to be "clothed with all the dishonors and corruptions of the tomb." And, above all, as the work of our adorable Redeemer will not be complete until the day of judgment—as there remain to Him redeeming offices still to be discharged in the kingdom of glory to which He has ascended—as His power must be seen in operation until the very last of the elect shall be gathered amongst all the generations that shall live upon the globe—there must be reserved, for the final vindication and triumph of this Redeemer, one splendid display of His power. The resurrection is reserved until His second coming, when He shall descend from the heavens as the life; and all who are in their graves shall hear His voice, and those that have fallen asleep in Him shall greet Him as He places His throne upon the clouds. For when He comes, He shall come "without sin unto salvation." When He comes, He shall come to be "glorified in his saints and admired in them that believe." And so the Christian is allowed to pass through what we call physical death, and is for a time concealed in the darkness of the grave, in order that he may signalize the final triumph of his Redeemer and Lord by the glory of his own resurrection from the tomb.

But with that precision of thought which marks the language of inspiration, the Holy Spirit is careful to say that so completely is death abolished by the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus and by His resurrection, that what we call in our human dialect death, is only a sleep. "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. * * * We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep." [I Thessalonians iv, 14, 15.] Oh! take in the truth for your immediate comfort, as you weep over the graves which hide those whom you have loved upon the earth. Take it in for the comfort which it will bring to you in the anticipation of your own approaching demise, that there is, through the redemption of Jesus Christ, forevermore no death at all. There may be the dissolution of the body, but that is not death. Neither soul nor body, in the true sense of the term, undergoes what the Scriptures mean when they speak

of death. The testimony of the Holy Ghost is given with all conceivable emphasis, that death is forever *abolished.* It is annihilated in reference to God's people; and we are at liberty to go up and down the earth and proclaim this as one of the prerogatives of the redeemed—that they live while they live upon the earth; they live while they sicken upon their beds in their chambers; they live when the departing breath conveys the emancipated spirit immediately into God's presence above; they live in the darkness and silence of the tomb, though the sleep may be deeper than the body ever before has known, but a sleep sweetly enjoyed in the bosom and in the embrace of the Savior.

Our Lord in the text gives a two-fold assurance. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." It ascends to a climax. "He that believeth, by virtue of the faith which unites him to me, lives: and it is impossible that in any true sense he shall ever die." That is to say, by the power of the life which resides in the believer through his union with Jesus Christ, who has "abolished death and brought life and immortality and light in the gospel," it is impossible that the believer shall ever die. And though the body dissolves in the grave, it, in its turn, shall live again. Let us look for a moment or two at the relation between these two things; and consider in what sense it is true, that if a man believe in the Lord Jesus Christ it is impossible that he shall ever die. In other words, I must try to explain, if I can, the amazing paradoxes which in these past sentences I have been throwing out upon your ear.

In the first place, *death, according to the Scriptures, is strictly a penal visitation.* It means separation from God; and with this the loss of holiness and life as communicated from Him. Hence the three-fold form in which death is presented to us. The moment man fell and came under the curse, he was cut off from God. Of course there is involved the loss of the righteousness in which he was originally created, and, consequent upon this, the corruption of his whole nature. This is *spiritual* death. Then, as the body is one department of our nature, the curse falls upon it, and you have *physical* death. Beyond the grave there is banishment from God's presence and from the glory of his power, which is *eternal* death. Death is simply the operation of the curse, as it takes hold upon the creature in all the departments of his nature. It falls upon the soul and separates it from God, and it becomes simply "dead in trespasses and sins." It falls upon the body and separates from it the informing and actuating spirit, and instantly it crumbles into

dust. Then, soul and body, in the case of the obstinate transgressor, are banished under the fearful anathema, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Now, if the Redeemer comes and takes away this penalty, undergoes the death for us, giving His life for our life, whatever may happen to us, my brethren, it does not happen under the penal operation of the law. Oh! that we could feel the truth in our times of deepest trouble and sorrow—that from the moment a man is, by saving faith, knitted to his Lord, nothing that befals him is of the nature of wrath! Nothing comes to him in the way of judicial displeasure. No sorrows darken his life with the shadow of the curse. And when that which we call death meets us face to face, and the body is resigned to its dominion, though we still term it death, it is only the dissolution of the body and not death according to the Scriptural meaning of that word. It is not death viewed in the light of the law. It is not the thing which comes to you under the operation of the curse. That penal death is forever abolished; and, therefore, what we call death is transfigured in the New Testament into a sweet sleep in Jesus. We can therefore understand the language of the text, when our Lord says to Martha, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." He may go to sleep for a hundred or a thousand years in that bed which Christ's own hand has prepared for him. He may lay that aching head, down there in the deep darkness, upon the promise of the covenant as the pillow upon which it may rest. But however long the slumber, it is a slumber that will break. "Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to do the work of thine hands." [Job xiv, 15.] Ah! my brethren, if the ear, even in the grave, is always open to the call which at the tomb said, "Lazarus, come forth," it is not death, but only a sleep—profound and dreary, perhaps, but still a sleep which God's own voice will break, and over which His power will triumph.

In the second place, *the death of the body is only disciplinary, by and through which the Savior makes provision for the sanctifying of the flesh.* After a man has been redeemed and renewed, through what a long discipline is the spirit carried! How many toils, how many cares, how many griefs, are laid upon the spirit, teaching submission, obedience, patience and hope! How are the answers to our most fervent prayers delayed! How often God seems to have "forgotten to be gracious, and seems to turn away his tender mercies" from us! How severe, in the case of many of His children, is that spiritual discipline through which He is continually shutting them up to the simplicity of faith in Him, so

that they walk not by sight and not by signs, but by cleaving to His word and to His testament! It does not end until the very last hour; for the last act of the soul is an act of faith upon the crucified Redeemer. If there be a spot which is holier than any other upon this sinful earth, it is the place where the believer falls asleep upon the bosom of his Lord; when he takes the last look of faith upon the cross and is transformed into the perfect likeness of his Head; when the Holy Ghost washes from the soul the last stain of sin; and when he who has, through a long life, wet his couch with tears, and bowed in penitence and shame before God, lifts himself erect in the symmetry of his spiritual being, "made meet for the saints' inheritance in glory!" It may be in an instant that this transfiguration takes place; for we know not the capacity of human thought. A drowning man will, in the thousandth part of a second, by the power of reminiscence, bring back the multiplied acts of a long life; and, in a period of time that is inappreciable by any measure which we can apply, will live his whole life again. And so, in that fractional part of a second, when you hear the gurgling of the last breath in the throat of the dying, and your heart breaks in sorrow over what seems to you the evidence of his pain, the spirit may be looking in the fulness of its joy upon the face of its redeeming Lord, in the ecstacy of perfect resemblance to Him. "Oh! the pain, the bliss of dying." Brethren, our senses deceive us. There is no death. The agony and the torture and the wrench are to us who look upon the dismal scene; but to the Christian who is passing over the narrow border which separates the two worlds, all is luxury, all is rapture, looking upon the face of his Redeemer, and being consciously changed into His image.

If there be this discipline to which the spirit is subjected, does not analogy teach you that there must be a corresponding discipline to which the body of the believer shall also submit? Is not the body a constituent part of us? Do not these two factors enter into our composition, a true body and a reasonable soul? Man sinned not only in the exercise of his intellectual and moral faculties, but by putting forth the powers of his body in the actual commission of the sin. The parts of the body are used daily by us in our transgressions, being the instruments by and through which the soul acts. The body of the Christian has been redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ, just as truly as the spirit. In our flesh and in our bones we are the members of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle uses, as an overwhelming argument for physical purity, that these members, which are the members of Christ, ought not and must not be made the members of a harlot. Through the indwell-

ing of the Holy Ghost the body is so the temple of God, that he who sins wantonly with the flesh is guilty of sacrilege. Paul, in the eighth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, speaking of this very resurrection, refers to it as "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." When this redeemed body shall be raised by the power of Jesus Christ from the tomb, then our adoption will be proclaimed. We are adopted and redeemed in our bodies, just as truly as we are in our spirits.

If this be so, these redeemed bodies must be sanctified, just as these redeemed spirits must be sanctified; and if the body is to be sanctified, being in itself a material substance, the sanctification which it undergoes must be a material sanctification. Therefore the Lord bears this polluted, sinful body into the grave as His laboratory, and takes it to pieces, bone from bone, member from member—the whole body is thoroughly disintegrated, that He may strip it of its leprous taint and raise it again a spiritual body, fit to hold communion with God. This is what the grave means to God's dear children. It does not come to them as the expression of the Father's wrath. It comes as the outworking of His love, as the discipline of His grace; providing for the purgation of the flesh, as before He has provided for the purgation of the spirit. "Flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of God:" "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." No, the grave is only the dark alley through which the body creeps along, and passes into the outspreading glory beyond. Dark, cold, silent, dreadful, perhaps, to our instinct as long as we are living; but it is the spot which Jesus has sanctified with His own presence, and where the body undergoes that preparation which shall enable it to rise a spiritual body, to be forever with the Lord. If this be all that death imports to the redeemed, I ask if the Lord may not, with strict propriety, say in the text, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die?" Even though the body go into the grave, it is not to experience the humiliation and shame which the law inflicts upon it. It goes there only to be purged of its leprosy, and to rise in its purity and in its glory at the last.

Once more, and I am done. *The resurrection and life of our Lord's body ensure the resurrection and life of our bodies.* The mysterious living tie which binds us, soul and body, to our Head, is not dissolved in the tomb. We are united to Him in His body, as well as in His spirit. With His true body and reasonable soul, He rose from His

grave and went to heaven. That resurrection was potentially our resurrection. And now there is going forth from His living body a power which feels down into the very tomb, searching through the clay which we pile upon the breast of the dead; which, with its magnetic attraction, will draw up the sleeping form into His presence, to sit at his own right hand in everlasting glory. The resurrection of the righteous dead has for its foundation the living connection, which death is unable to break, between their bodies and the body of their risen Lord. Because Christ has His body in heaven, He must draw us there in our bodily presence, to stand around His throne and render the praises which are His due. If all this be so, may not Christ say in the text, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die?" We may undergo changes of the body, but we do not undergo death. We do not pass through that which the Savior has forever abolished. He has converted death into a discipline of grace for the body; and His living presence in the kingdom of glory secures our translation from our graves to our thrones above.

What an assertion of faith do we make, in a dying moment, when the soul, just as it is sinking apparently into an abyss, springs upward upon the bosom of its Redeemer above! It is a grand privilege to die. Sense may recoil from it; nature within us may shrink back in alarm; and we may still, using the language of sense, look at death as the last enemy. But it is a glorious privilege in one last act to gather up all the energies of the spirit, and confess, in the very moment when we are sinking beneath the shaft of our foe, our perfect trust in the power and victory of our unseen Head. It is a privilege, when we have served God, to lay down the toil and the burden, and to enter into rest. Look at the sombre drapery around this pulpit to-day. They tell the story of a patriarch who, through eighty years, bore the burden of life, and through fifty of those eighty years, carried upon his heart the burden of the cross, abundant in labors in season and out of season. Shall his children rise in their grief, and say that this venerable Father shall not at the last have rest? And shall we, who share in their sorrow and mourn the loss of this most faithful elder,* not be willing that the jaded form shall at last lie down in the sweet sleep which the Redeemer has provided? Oh! it were cruel to wish God's children to remain longer upon the earth, when He calls them to the world of reward; and it is lawful to sink the selfishness of personal sorrow in a true sympathy with their eternal joy. It is lawful to rejoice that they, at least, are delivered

* Mr. Joseph A. Maybin.

from the toils which we must bear a little longer, and from the conflicts which we for a season must sustain.

And then, my brethren, when the supreme hour comes to us, there will come along with it the supreme grace which will make it perfectly easy to die. We shall encounter death, not only with resignation, but with the most complete anticipation of joy. If it come to us, it will come as a relief from our burdens and as the entrance into glory. Let us thank God that there is reserved for us this prerogative of what men call death, but which we know is only translation into the presence of Him "whom having not seen we love."

If there are any in this assembly who shrink from the anticipation of death, I come to them with the Gospel's great secret. I say to them, until they know the sweetness of the Gospel; until they know what is in the power and in the grace of Christ, and in the power and in the presence of the Spirit, they know nothing yet as they ought to know. The secret of secrets is "the secret of the Lord." It is found in heart-felt, simple, cordial trust in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. He is "the Resurrection and the Life." The man who consciously believes in the Lord Jesus, in the moment when that faith is in actual exercise, is stripped of bondage and of fear.

XLIV.

CHRIST THE BUILDER OF THE CHURCH.*

ZECHARIAH vi, 12, 13:—"*Behold the man whose name is THE BRANCH: and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.*"

In this passage we have a remarkable prediction of the Messiah, partly conveyed through symbol, partly uttered in language. A brief historical statement is necessary to make it understood. The first act of the Persian Cyrus, after subverting the Babylonian empire, you remember, was to decree the restoration of the captive Jews. These were conducted to their own land by Zerubbabel and Joshua: the former being invested with the civil jurisdiction; the latter with the priesthood. Their piety was signalized by immediate efforts to rebuild the temple upon Mount Zion. The work, however, languished, from the extreme poverty of the people, and the sluggishness that springs from continued discouragement. The Prophet, Zechariah, was accordingly raised up to stimulate their flagging zeal; and to him was afforded a series of visions, the tenor of which was to exhibit Jehovah as still the God and protector of the Hebrews.

In the particular work of rebuilding the temple, very important aid was furnished in the pious contributions of those Jews who remained voluntary exiles in Chaldea. Upon one occasion, when the deputies arrived from the distant East, the Prophet is instructed to go into the house of Josiah, with whom these gifts were doubtless entrusted, and there, in the presence of the whole commission, to take of the silver and gold which they had brought, and to "make crowns and set them upon the head of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the High Priest." We are not concerned at present with the structure of those crowns, represented

* Preached at the ordination of Messrs. J. B. WOODS and W. F. OGDEN, as Ruling Elders in the First Presbyterian Church, New Orleans.

as plural—whether they were several in number, or one complex crown of several parts. But as, under the Jewish dispensation, the sacerdotal and the royal functions were widely separated—being discharged not only by distinct tribes, but by designated families in each—this coronation of the High Priest would be at once construed as symbolical. The explanation is at once afforded: The Messiah should be the Builder of the spiritual temple, of which this of Solomon's was only the type. In order to do this He must unite in Himself the priestly and the royal functions—and to this consolidation of offices upon Him we owe the consummation of those counsels of peace, devised in eternity between the persons of the Godhead, for the salvation of our lost race.

I know not a richer theme for spiritual meditation than that of CHRIST JESUS AS THE TRUE BUILDER OF HIS CHURCH; who "will lay her stones with fair colors, and her foundations with sapphires—who will make her windows of agate, and her gates of carbuncles, and all her borders of pleasant stones."

Your patience will then be challenged in the exposition of the three following points:

1. THE SENSE IN WHICH CHRIST IS THUS EMINENTLY THE BUILDER OF HIS TEMPLE;

2. THE UNION OF THE PRIESTLY AND ROYAL OFFICES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF ITS SERVICE;

3. THE COMPETENCY OF CHRIST ALONE TO BEAR THE GLORY WHICH SHALL ACCRUE.

That Christ is here designated under the title, "The Branch," is plain, from the fact that it is employed throughout the prophetical Scriptures as the appellation of the Messiah. The fundamental reference is that contained in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." What follows in this prediction fastens the application of it to the Messiah: "and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." In another connection the same Prophet says, "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." Here, it will be perceived, the two constituent terms of our Lord's mediatorial person are signalized in the reference to both the divine and the human natures. In like manner, Jeremiah takes up the term as an accepted designation of Christ, in the twenty-third and the thirty-third chapters of his prophecy:

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch; and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth; in his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely—and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" The Prophet, Zechariah, too, in another of his visions besides the text, recognizes the angel of the Lord saying, "Hear now, O Joshua, the High Priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee, for they are men wondered at—for, behold, I will bring forth my servant, The Branch." These references unquestionably point to one and the same individual; and they set forth antitheses which were never united except in the person of Christ. He is at once a king, and yet the servant of the Lord—the Branch of David and yet the Lord, our Righteousness—the Branch of Jehovah, and yet the fruit of the earth; whilst the offices He discharges, of Lawgiver, King, and Judge, are precisely the functions which the Scriptures assign to the Mediator. He it is, then, the Messiah of the Old Testament, the Lord Christ of the New, who is designated here as The Branch; a term applied fitly to His human nature, in the humility and condescension of its origin, and in the gradual development of His mission and claims before the world.

I. Of this man, The Branch, it is affirmed with the emphasis of a double utterance, that "he shall build—even he shall build—the temple of the Lord." The repetition evidently carries with it a sense that is exclusive. He *alone* builds the Church—and all human agents are but the instruments with which He works; as the mason with his trowel, or the carpenter with his saw. Let us discover in what particulars this is so eminently affirmed of Christ. He is the Builder, then,

1. *Because the Church has from all eternity existed ideally and potentially in Him.* Every structure has its origin in the conception of an architect. It exists in thought, before it is rendered in stone. The image, too, exists not in vague outline, as the shadow which is cast upon the ground; but in the minuteness of all its parts, as these are combined in the perfected whole. The stones in its foundation; every beam and timber in its frame; the pins and sockets by which these are secured; every nail driven into its walls; the chambers and halls into which its space is divided; every window which admits light, and every lattice which excludes the glare; the mouldings and carvings upon its panels; the fresco of its ceiling, and the capitals which adorn its columns; all the details, and their total effect, lie within the designer's thought; just as a landscape, with its exquisite but diminished proportions, lies in the

camera of an artist. So distinct, indeed, and so perfect, is the image in the mind, that its diagram is readily thrown upon the trestle-board. Section by section, the interior arrangements and external proportions are figured to the eye; the front elevation reveals the countenance of the whole; until, step by step, the conception is wrought by cunning workmen into the concrete reality of iron, wood, or stone. Precisely so, the Church exists as an eternal thought in the mind of God. His purpose is, that intelligent creatures shall be brought into just such associations as are realized in the Church below; and shall there be trained under the discipline of His grace, to render the service and the worship which are consummated in the Church above. But, whether here or there, she is viewed only in Christ Jesus, her glorious Head. In the divine thought, she exists only in Him. This is essential to the idea of the Church; so that to separate her from Him in thought would be to cancel the conception, as to separate her in fact would be to destroy her actual being.

Constrained as we are, by the limitation of our faculties, to represent divine things by analogies, we must remember that these are always imperfect, and liable to mislead when too closely pressed. It is not intended to represent the Lord Jesus as simply the architect, who frames in Himself the image of what the Church is to be when wrought into actual existence according to that model. We mean something more: that, as the eternal God thinks her, He thinks her in His incarnate Son. In His divine purpose, she exists virtually and immanently in Him; and all the dealings of His love with her are through Him and in Him. Consider for a moment who are the subjects of this grace, and the reason of this will immediately appear. They are fallen men, who lie beneath the penalty of the broken law under which they were first placed. Granting, then, the infinite mercifulness of God, the serious question arises, how shall the bar to its outflow be removed, which is interposed by His own justice and integrity? The difficulty lies at the very initiation of a scheme of grace. Impelled, by His absolute holiness, to be displeased with the sinner, and, by His inflexible justice, to condemn him, how shall He entertain thoughts of favor and life? The divine attributes must be consistent with each other, and must be exhibited in their adorable harmony. It is mediation alone that solves the problem; and the possibility of this lies in the tri-personal constitution of the Godhead. At the council-board of the eternal Three, it is the Son who answers to the challenge of justice and law. He undertakes the cause of the guilty and lost, and represents, in His own person, before the

divine tribunal, all whose guilt He chooses to expiate. The thoughts of compassion, which justice inhibited towards transgressors viewed in themselves, may be freely indulged towards them in the person of a responsible surety who is pledged to discharge them from guilt. In themselves, they are objects only of that "wrath revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." In the Mediator, they are viewed as restored to that image of God from which they fell, and to that communion with Him which this fits them to enjoy. We are so familiar with the idea of mediation as necessary in our approach to God, as, perhaps, somewhat to overlook its corresponding necessity in God's loving approach to us. Yet, in the hours of legal conviction,

> "When guilt lay heavy on the soul,
> A vast, oppressive load,"

who has not cried out to the daysman, as did the Israelites to Moses at the burning mount, "Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die?" Thus it is, the Church exists *ideally* and *potentially* in Christ. Composed of those who have forfeited every claim under the law, there is no way by which she could be made to exist, but by relating her to a Mediator who is competent and willing to relieve her disabilities. In Him she might become the object of the divine favor; and all God's purposes and thoughts would turn to Him, in whom, as her representative, she would virtually exist.

Here, too, we have the key by which to interpret that large class of Scripture texts which affirm the believer's election to eternal life in this very relationship to a Mediator, in whom he becomes the object of divine regard. Take but a single example, from Ephesians: "According as he hath chosen us *in him* before the foundation of the world," "having predestinated us to the adoption of children *by Christ Jesus* to himself," "wherein he hath made us *accepted in the beloved.*" If all believers are thus chosen in Christ—if their appointment to the adoption of children is by Christ—and if their acceptance with God turns upon being in Him as the beloved, then surely the Church, as embracing these, must exist only as she exists in Him, who is, upon that ground, the true and alone Builder of His temple.

2. The next step of the builder, after framing the design, is to go into the quarry and obtain the materials for his structure. *Thus does Christ go down into the depth of the curse, and rescue men from the ruin into which they are plunged by sin.* It has been shown that the ideal conception of the Church is that of a body of redeemed sinners, who are viewed in Christ as discharged from guilt. This pledge of the surety

must be actually fulfilled; the redemption must be actually accomplished, upon which the Church rests as a basis. Here, evidently, two things are involved: Christ must achieve the ransom of those who are to be the stones in His temple; and He must acquire the life to be imparted to them as "living stones" in the same. As man's original relation to God was through the law, every privilege and every right was forfeited upon transgression. He was at once sold under execution for the debt, and became a slave to the law. He is bound under the penalty, to pay the forfeiture incurred. If then a Mediator interposes for his deliverance, the first condition is to discharge this debt. He must take up the bond which the law has foreclosed against the sinner, and satisfy the claim which justice is exacting through the penalty. Thus alone can the Mediator establish any right to use these as the materials of His spiritual temple. The Father's grant of them to the Son, in the council of redemption, was conditioned upon this vicarious payment of their original legal obligations; otherwise justice is in conflict with mercy, and the harmony of the divine attributes is fatally disturbed. In the work of redemption, therefore, Christ, by canceling the sinner's bond, buys up the claim which the law holds under its judgment, and transfers it to Himself. He, as the Builder, has now the right to go down into the ruins of the first covenant, and quarry out the stones which He has purchased to Himself.

This temple, moreover, is not material, but spiritual. It is the Church of the redeemed restored to the image of God in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness; who "also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house," "builded together for a habitation of God through the spirit." But the natural effect of sin was to destroy the life of God in the soul. It separated man from Him who is the source of all life; and spiritual death was the immediate and necessary consequence. The life to be restored must first be acquired; and acquired through the same process of law by which it was judicially forfeited. The principle is perceived as soon as it is stated. When man was originally put upon probation, the law took a lien upon his life as security for the obedience. The distinct promise of that covenant was the perpetual guaranty of this life upon the fulfilment of the condition. At the expiration of his term, life would have been held forever, through an approved obedience, upon a legal tenure, subject to no conditions, incapable of future alienation, and guaranteed under a judicial decision. Transgression, of course, reversed the whole. The sentence, which pronounced the sinner guilty, extinguished his life, which was forever forfeited to the penalty. The same act of

redemption, then, which lifts this condemnation, discharges this forfeiture. When the guilt is removed, the right to life is restored, and He who becomes our righteousness becomes also our life. Both are alike vested in Him, to be held in sacred trust for all whom He represents in these immense transactions. He holds their life precisely as He holds His own, under the law's guaranty, safe from all contingencies, and only needing to be communicated to each to conclude the scheme. The language of inspiration is singularly emphatic as to these results. Christ is declared to have "*abolished death* and brought life and immortality to light in the gospel." As to Himself, it is said, "In that he died, he died unto sin *once;* but in that he liveth, he liveth *unto God*—death hath no more dominion over him." And so the life of His people, acquired by the same purchase, rests by the same title in Him, as trustee, to hold and distribute according to the stipulations of that covenant in which they were given Him to be redeemed. Thus does the Builder (Christ) go into the quarry of the law, to redeem from the curse those whom He will build into His Church, and acquire for them the life by which they become the living stones in His spiritual house.

3. But this life, thus acquired, must also be communicated, which is the third step on the part of this Builder, *in renewing and sanctifying the members of His body, the Church.* The agent by whom this work is accomplished, as you all know, is the Holy Spirit; the exposition of whose functions would be a delightful subject of meditation, were it not too far aside the line of thought we are now pursuing. We are restricted to the relations it sustains to the person and office of Him whose name is The Branch. By whatever agency wrought, He must be considered its original author. Observe, then, the following facts: In all this work of imparting and developing spiritual life the Holy Ghost is uniformly presented as officially subordinate to the Son. He is called the Spirit of Christ; whom the Father will send in Christ's name; whom Christ will Himself send, after His own departure from the earth: and the office He fulfils is that of "bringing to remembrance whatsoever Christ has said," "taking the things of Christ and showing them unto us." Evidently, then, all that the Holy Ghost does within the Church, He does under the commission and seal of her acknowledged Head It is Christ who acts through the Spirit, as His deputy and vicar upon earth; building His spiritual temple by the agency of the Quickener, to whom it appertains to breathe into the soul the life which the Mediator has purchased and holds in trust to be communicated.

Again: in the economy of grace, it is the final stage which is assigned

to the Holy Spirit, since redemption cannot be applied until it has been achieved. As, in His divine personality, He is from the Father and the Son, so He takes up the plan of salvation when the distinctive offices of both cease. He can have no functions to discharge until the work of the Redeemer is finished, upon which they are conditioned. What is this but to recognize Christ as still carrying on His work through the executive agency of "the other Comforter," or advocate? Precisely as the Son acknowledges his subordination to the Father, so the Spirit is revealed as the commissioned agent of the Son. If the authority of the First limits the commission of the Second, so does His work, in turn, define that of the Third. If Christ could say without derogation of Himself, "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the work," upon the same principle it is true, that, in all the operations of the Spirit, the Redeemer Himself fulfils the promises made to the faith of His people.

Still further: in the whole progress of sanctification by the Spirit, Christ is the *pattern and measure* of it to us. The pattern—not only in the sense of a model proposed to our imitation, representing the virtues we are to practise, and the graces with which we are to be adorned—but as the original and type after which the Holy Spirit, in sanctifying, fashions the believer. Just as an artist places the original before him, and transfers feature after feature to the canvas, in the production of an exact likeness or copy; so does the Spirit reproduce in us the image of Christ, which is the model or type regulating His work upon the human soul. Sanctification may therefore be described, not only as the development of the divine life which He has infused, but as the recasting of the Savior's image in the saints. It is the Christ that is formed within them—the "Christ in them, the hope of glory." In like manner, as the Redeemer is the pattern, so He is the measure, of our sanctification. The personal holiness of the Head, which is the concrete representation of the divine image in which we are renewed, becomes the standard of our attainments; whilst the gracious law, under which He places us, binds obedience upon the heart, and proves the necessity of holiness, as corresponding with His own.

Under every view, the Holy Spirit in His work only carries out the design of the Builder, and under His regulative authority. The life which is imparted is the life drawn from the Mediator with whom it is deposited; it is developed and expanded according to the pattern which is found in the personal Christ; and all its manifestations are referred to this perfect model as the standard of measurement. The stones are not

only hewn out of the quarry, but they are beveled and squared until fitted to their places in the temple of the great King.

4. But this view is not complete until we have considered the fourth act of the Builder, *in revealing the truth by which believers are sanctified, and being Himself the precise object of their faith.* God, in the Gospel, deals with man as man; not mechanically, as though he were a stone, but according to the laws of his intellectual and moral nature. Hence the indispensable necessity of truth to his salvation. It is called the seed, from which the whole experience of the Christian germinates and ramifies—"being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." However direct the impact of the Holy Spirit upon the human soul—however mysterious the influence by which He renews and stimulates its powers and faculties—He always acts by and through them. He deals with spirit by the laws of spirit; superseding none of its functions, but directing them all in due subordination. He enlightens the mind, purges the conscience, sanctifies the affections, magnetizes the will. He blends His own agency with that of the creature, develops in him the consciousness of his own spontaneity, and holds him fast to the recognition of his own responsibility. He does not interfere with the laws of our spiritual economy; but dwells as the spirit of life within its wheels, which move in their undisturbed harmony as by the first impulse from the Creator's hand. We cannot tell how it is done. We only know the fact itself: that the mind sees with its own eyes, through the light which is shed down upon it in spiritual illumination—that the heart loves with its own preference the beauty of God's holiness, by which it is attracted—that the will turns freely upon the pivot of its own polarity, and rests only in the magnetic meridian pointing to duty as its pole. To take religion out of the sphere of the intelligence and reason, would be to make obedience a contradiction and worship a nullity. The Scriptures therefore maintain the necessity of truth as the instrument of sanctification: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth;" "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart."

Of all this truth the eternal Word is the only revealer. "To this end," says Christ, "was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Originally, it lay in the unexplored depths of Jehovah's thought. It is not possible that He should be known in the mystery of His being, or in the determinations

of His will, except in so far as He shall choose to disclose. They cannot be inferred from the analogies of nature, nor do they lie implicitly in the data of consciousness. They transcend the investigations of reason, and are beyond the reach of discovery. It belongs to that person of the Godhead, whose distinction is to be from the Father, as the only begotten, to report the free thoughts of the Godhead, whether in providence or grace, and especially the method which shall deal with the stupendous problem of sin. On this point our Savior distinctly affirms, "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, that dwelleth in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him:" and again, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." He alone who dwells in the bosom of the infinite can lift from the abyss these transcendental facts and let them down into the human mind. It is, I conceive, upon this fundamental ground that the Son was the efficient Creator by whom the Father made the world; for what is the universe but one vast word, by which the Deity is revealed? The idea of revelation underlies that of creation itself, which is but the means to an end. The Divine Being, infinitely happy in the consciousness of His own perfections, would behold them in the reflection of a mirror. He creates. Heaven and earth are peopled with intelligent races, before whom is spread the panorama of the universe; upon every part of whose frame is stamped the evidence of His eternal power and Godhead. His glory is gathered back

> "in the applause
> Where it's extended, which like an arch reverberates
> The voice again."

and the praise of the creature becomes the echo of the Creator's joy.

Further than this, the whole body of Gospel truth is actually made by Christ; which is only in the process of becoming truth, as unfolded in the facts of His personal career. So that He is not only the revealer of truth, but He is the truth itself. Thus, in His person and work, He becomes the precise object of the believer's faith. All truth centres in Him as the revealer; and His precious mediation and expiatory death directly challenge our hope and trust. Christ is then the Builder in the pre eminent sense that all the truth by which the soul is fed comes from Him; and He, as the object of that faith by which we are saved, is the "chief corner-stone, elect, precious," upon which the Church rests—the only foundation upon which the superstructure stands in eternity as well as time.

5. This last expression suggests the only remaining view I care to present of Christ's office as the Builder of His Church: it is that *He prepares the glory into which she shall be hereafter transfigured.* "It is expedient for you," says Christ to His disciples weeping at the prospect of His departure to the Father, "it is expedient for you that I go away"—"I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am ye may be also." His exaltation to power, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, was necessary as the reward of His voluntary humiliation and obedience upon earth. But this reward He will share with the members of His body: "My joy give I unto you, that your joy may be full." The benediction which He will pronounce upon His faithful servants is, "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord:" and the final promise of "the faithful and true witness," closing the canon of Scripture, is, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." The meaning cannot be mistaken. It is that His Church can no more than Himself remain always in a state of humiliation and conflict: that He ascends to heaven in His official character, as the Head of His people, to prepare the mansions in which they are to dwell. He must, as their representative, take possession of the glory which is to be their inheritance forever. They, too, must cast off the garments of shame, and be "clothed in fine linen, clean and white." They must ascend to Him who is their Father as well as His, and be crowned with the dignities which are a conqueror's reward. The church militant must become the church triumphant; and be transfigured into the glorious bride, the Lamb's wife, and sit down at the marriage supper which celebrates the sacred espousal.

The blessedness of the redeemed will be found in their fellowship with Christ in His glory. If the adorable Son could pray to His Father, "Glorify thou me with thine own self"—describing this as "the glory which he had with him before the world was"—if the eternal glory of the Son was a glory that was not separable from that of the Father, but a glory which consisted in the ineffable communion of the Godhead—how much more must the glory of the saints be that which is reflected from their divine Head, in the blessedness of His mediatorial exaltation? As though to correct all carnal conceptions springing from the gorgeous imagery in which it is described, the splendor of heaven is declared to be not material, but spiritual: "The glory of heaven did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." It is "the Lamb in the midst of the throne" who "feeds them, and leads them to living fountains of

waters." The new song, which no man could learn but the one hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth, fills heaven with the words, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." And the seal which gives security to this joy is, "that there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him." Surely, when amidst the holiness and joy of the upper temple, its Head-stone is brought forth with these shoutings of grace, grace unto it; it shall be known to be the work of that Builder who laid the foundation in His blood, and sunk it in the depths of His own grave.

The scheme of thought, projected at the opening of this discourse, proves too large for a single discussion; and the remaining topics must be postponed until the next Sabbath. The subject however presented in this, is eminently suited to the solemnity in which we are about to engage—the setting apart, by ordination, to the office of the eldership, those upon whom the choice of this church has fallen. If Christ Himself be the Builder, then must He rule "over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end." The Church is no self-constituted society, with laws and ordinances of her own devising. She has nothing to do with carnal policy, but is required simply to obey the authority of her Head and to promote His glory. She exists in Him, and He dwells in her by the presence of His Spirit. As she lives to execute His will, so is she directed by His wisdom. His truth is her only weapon, His cross her only banner, and His power her only defence.

Considered, therefore, in her relation to Him, the Church is an absolute monarchy; for the supremacy of her King, from its very nature, can neither be delegated nor shared. By whatever human agency this government may be visibly administered, these can be invested only with *ministerial* power. This we hold to be entrusted to officers designated in Scripture bishops or elders: the two terms being interchanged and strictly convertible, having only this distinction—that the former indicates the nature of their function as overseers of the flock, while the latter implies the dignity of the office and the qualifications necessary for its discharge. The eldership, though radically one, branches into the functions of *teaching* and of *ruling*—which require, to some extent, different gifts and a different training. So far as government and rule

are concerned, there is no distinction between them either in dignity or in authority. And it is the will of our Head that the government of His Church should be visibly administered by a plurality of elders, chosen by the people themselves and drawn from their own body—so that the Church shall be, under its human regimen, a free commonwealth.

One other principle ought to be signalized just here—that this power of administration vests in these officers not as individuals and singly, but as they are co-ordinated in a court. As we technically express it in the books, it is a *joint*, and not a *several* power: and the liberties of the people are protected, further, by a gradation of courts with the power of review and control, rising from the Session of a particular Church to a National, or, if you please, even an Œcumenical Assembly. But I cannot here enter upon a detailed exposition of the principles of our Presbyterian system. I have briefly indicated these two, which lie at the foundation, because they are involved in the act which is presently to be performed. Ordination is simply the form, prescribed in the Scriptures and therefore enjoined in our standards, by which men are inducted into these spiritual offices. It is an act of government—conveying no magical virtue, but only investing with authority to discharge the functions which are assumed. It adds an immense responsibility to remember that these offices are conferred immediately by the great Head of the Church, His holy will finding its outward expression in the free election made by His people. But this is most sweetly suggestive of the grace which He will bestow in the faithful and prayerful performance of these delicate duties. These elders are called to bear no burdens, to assume no responsibilities in their own strength. His grace will ever be sufficient for them. And you, my brethren, who will promise "to yield them all honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord," are comforted in the conviction that this is no subjection to those who are rather "your servants for Christ's sake"—but a willing homage to the authority of the great King who sits upon His throne in Zion. May His blessing rest upon the service to which we now attend! And may the mantle of those who have gone up from the eldership of this church, to sit with the elders around the throne, rest upon those who shall to-day fill their vacant seats on earth!

XLV.

CHRIST THE BUILDER OF THE CHURCH.*

CONTINUED.

ZECHARIAH vi, 12, 13:—"*Behold the man whose name is THE BRANCH: and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.*"

In the preceding discourse we proposed to discuss the text under the three following heads:

1. THE SENSE IN WHICH CHRIST IS THUS EMINENTLY THE BUILDER OF HIS TEMPLE;

2. THE UNION OF THE PRIESTLY AND ROYAL OFFICES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF ITS SERVICE;

3. THE COMPETENCY OF CHRIST ALONE TO BEAR THE GLORY WHICH SHALL ACCRUE.

The first of these, however, was all that was accomplished at that time.

II. We come now to the second topic—THE UNION OF THE PRIESTLY AND ROYAL OFFICES IN CHRIST; by which He is rendered supreme in the church He has built, and administers its service: "He shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Here again is a double statement of the main thought: not only that He shall sit as a ruler, but that He shall rule under the sanctity of a priest. The limits of a single discourse will not allow the exposition of these offices separately. Assuming that you are familiar with the doctrines of each, I must consider them only in the relation in which they are bound together. It is the result accruing from the combination of the two with which we are at present alone concerned. Even with this restriction,

* This discourse, together with the preceding, was preached, for substance, at the dedication of the First Presbyterian Church, Savannah, Ga., June 9th, 1872.

only those points which are the most salient admit of being now distinguished.

1. *In the coronation of this Priest-King we have the germinant fulfilment of all the promises of grace to us, and the application of the whole scheme in our personal salvation.* After satisfaction has been made to the law, according to the exactions of strict justice—after this satisfaction has taken the form of sacrifice as an act of solemn worship—after the priestly Advocate has filed His plea of intercession in the chancery above—after the judicial decree has been rendered by the court, which secures the sinner's title to eternal life—the whole process fails of any practical benefit, if there be no provision to carry this decree into effect. It sleeps inoperative upon the record, if it be not taken up and issued in the sinner's actual experience. The Father, whose office it is in these transactions to represent the majesty of the law, delivers the sentence of judicial acquittal into the hands of the Advocate who has sued it out. But He, as the surety who stands pledged to present these redeemed sinners before the Father without spot or wrinkle, must assume another function pertaining to another office, before this mighty trust can be discharged. Just here comes in the kingship of the Redeemer, with its executive prerogatives. The Priest, who by sacrifice has purchased our pardon, and by intercession has confirmed the legal title, is now clothed with mediatorial authority as King to dispense the same. Through His word and by His Spirit, He conveys it to the sinner, seals it upon his conscience, and fills him with the joy of full acceptance with God: precisely as a condemned criminal, whose pardon has been issued by the chief magistrate, is neither liberated from his cell, nor rejoices in the sense of security, until the certified warrant arrives which knocks off his chains and restores him to society again. Thus must the Redeemer be a priest to recover the life which the sinner has forfeited to justice; and a King, in order to convey and apply it: and, in the union of both, "the counsel of peace" finds its consummation.

Accessory to this is the thought, that in Christ's exaltation is begun the fulfilment of all the promises to ourselves. We have already seen that the Mediator interposes as an agent with whom the infinitely holy God may consistently treat on man's behalf. As the second Adam, He represents us in the covenant of redemption. In Him as our surety, the Father views us as objects of compassionate regard; through Him all the offices of eternal life are made; and to Him all the promises are given, which are the warrant of our faith: "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God by us." As our

surety, He clothed Himself with flesh, passed under the curse, obeyed even unto death, and went down into the humiliation of the grave. As our head, He rose from the tomb, ascended into heaven, sat down at the right hand of God, and reigns in glory forever. But all this is potentially and inclusively the fulfilment of the same to His people. What is done to the representative is constructively done to the represented. If they are "planted in the likeness of his death," and if "they rise with him to newness of life," then surely His ascension and reign are virtually theirs. These privileges are secured to them by the pledge of His exaltation, in which, as in the germ, their perfect blessedness is immanently contained. Exactly as the water, brewed in the earth, is conveyed by the channel of some river, and then turned by human art into vast reservoirs for the supply of a great city: so grace, issuing from the infinite depths of divine love, is borne through the channel of Christ's priesthood, and treasured up in His office as King. Thence it is distributed, under His royal bounty, to all beneath His rule, until they shall drink at last from the river of life beneath His throne in heaven.

2. *Christ must sit a priest upon His throne, in order to adjust our complex relations to the divine law.* If there be one conviction fastened upon us more firmly than another, it is that of personal responsibility for our own acts—whether of obedience or of sin. It is absolutely indestructible. Sophistry may obscure it by attempts to explain it away, but cannot extinguish it in the human soul. The simple fact is, that we are created under law. The very furniture of intellectual and moral endowments demands a law to which these are correlated. Given intelligence and reason, and these infer at once an infinite mind by whom they are bestowed and to whom they are subject. Given the moral faculty which appreciates the distinction between right and wrong, between good and evil, between holiness and sin, and we are, by the force of that moral constitution, under the authority of a law which is both their exposition and their standard. We are not to conceive of man as first created an intelligent being, and then by a secondary act of the divine will placed under the regulation of law; but the nature itself postulates that law as the necessary condition of its existence. We cannot even think them in disjunction. The law creates the sphere in which these powers move. You might just as well speak of the lungs without an atmosphere to breathe, as of the understanding and the conscience without moral relations within which to be exercised. By whatever terms you define man, he is by the force of the conception a being under law. Hence the involuntary emotions of complacency and of shame, which

spring up under the operations of conscience, when we review our own conduct—of approval and of blame, when we survey the behavior of others. So long as this organ of law exists in our bosoms, its response to the interrogations of justice will be as certain as the echo of the hills.

Yet, in apparent contravention of this individual responsibility, is the great doctrine of faith—that we are justified before God, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by the obedience of another, which is simply reckoned as our own. The two great propositions of the Apostle—the one negative, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight;" the other positive, "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law"—these two stand over against each other as the Ebal and the Gerizim, from which the curses and the blessings are proclaimed under this dispensation of grace. I sincerely regret the limitation of time which prevents me from showing how this instinctive recognition of personal accountability lies at the root of a sinner's difficulty in laying hold upon Christ for salvation: and, on the other hand, how faith, when it is exercised, clears up the whole difficulty; since the entire contents of our nature are drawn out in the appropriation by which the obedience of another is made really ours, as though it were substantially wrought from the material of our own acts.

Pretermitting all this as too large in its range for present discussion, the question arises, how shall this complex relation of personal responsibility and of federal obedience be adjusted? The answer is found in the consolidated offices of the Priest-King. The Priest offers the sacrifice to God which taketh away the sins of the world. As the obedience, even unto death, was rendered for us, the Father accepts it as our own; and no disposal or use can be made of it other than to apply it in law as the ground of our justification. Upon this basis a legal title is obtained not only to freedom, but to full acceptance with God. The Priest's separate work is done: and now, gathering up the sacerdotal robes, He ascends the throne upon which He sits a ruler. Between the mitre and the crown He places "the counsel of peace," to be carried into effect under the seal of that royalty which dispenses the grace which the priesthood has purchased. The law which the Priest has "magnified and made honorable" forever, the King now administers from the throne, upon which the two, conjoined into one, now sit. This law He binds with gracious sanctions upon the hearts of His willing subjects; imparts the strength with which it may be obeyed; sweetens subjection to its authority by love-tokens continually bestowed; and finally accepts, as the expression of a generous gratitude to Him, an obedience

altogether too scant to meet the rigors of divine justice. Already justified by an obedience only made their own by faith, their observance of duty comes up as the incense of a sweet affection to Him who has redeemed them by His blood. In this lies the sharp distinction between an evangelical and a legal obedience: the former, rendered to the divine law, as it is the law of the Mediator—by those who are already justified, and over whom the penalty has no power—in the strength of grace which is given from above—presented not as a price of favor, but as the offering of grateful and adoring love; the latter, an obedience to the law as the original condition of life—in the resources of human strength alone—by those who are dead in sin, seeking by dead works to appease the living God—slavish and mercenary in the spirit, which would reduce the Judge into the compromise of eternal and holy claims. In the Priest King we have the union of the cross and the crown—of the law obeyed and the law administered—of righteousness imputed and righteousness inherent—of pardon and holiness—of the obedience which justifies and the obedience which meets the sense of personal accountability. The adjusted relations are put into a single line by the Holy Ghost in the Scripture, "Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ."

3. *This conjunction of the priesthood with royalty defines the nature of Christ's kingdom, and establishes His supremacy in it.* There was a profound significance in the old theocracy, a kingdom over which Jehovah ruled as the recognized sovereign and head. Though invisible, His administration was conducted through an immediate and controlling providence, by which obedience was enforced to laws ordained by His supreme authority. Thus in the bosom of history was planted a type of the Redeemer's Church; which is, in its fundamental conception, a pure theocracy. He who sits upon her throne is "the word made flesh, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"—elsewhere described as "the brightness of the Father's glory and express image of his person." Of this God-man it was said in eternity, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." As then you look upon His adorable form, lo! He is clad in the sacred vestments of a priest; for in His priesthood He redeemed those who are the subjects of His rule. The kingdom, then, which He administers is spiritual. Those of whom it is composed have been quickened into spiritual life by the Holy Ghost—the laws by which it is governed are enforced by gracious sanctions—the obedience which is exacted is that of the heart, not confined to the hard, external letter, but reflecting its inward spirit and purpose—the con-

quests it achieves are spiritual, "that every tongue may confess that he is Lord to the glory of the Father"—"the weapons of its warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds"—the vicegerent who dwells within it is the eternal Spirit—the bonds by which it is held together are the bonds of holy communion and love—and the end for which it exists is the solemn worship of its divine Head and Lord. It is only over such a kingdom—spiritual in its subjects, character and aim—that a priest could reign at all: "My kingdom is not of this world," says this Priest, as the sacrificial anguish was darkening upon His soul, "else would my servants fight for me, but now is my kingdom not from hence."

The emphasis, which twice affirms His reign, establishes the supremacy, as well as the reality, of His jurisdiction in the Church. Why should He not be supreme? Is not His authority expressly delegated by the infinite Father? Is He too not the infinite Son, the creator of those whom He rules? Are not His subjects His "purchased possession," through redemption from the curse? Is not the life with which they are instinct derived from Him, by the communication of His Spirit? and is it not preserved by fellowship with Himself through faith? And is not the end of her existence the manifestation of His own and the Father's glory? He is, then, in the strictest sense, her Lord; and His rights are those of an absolute proprietor. All power is given into His hands, which He guards with the holiest jealousy. He is supreme in giving to the Church the constitution under which her organization is effected—the charter under which her privileges are held—the laws under which her affairs are administered—the officers under whom these laws are applied—the ordinances under which her worship is conducted. Nothing that pertains either to faith or order, but is prescribed by His authority. All human power within her domain is exclusively ministerial and declarative. Neither popes, bishops nor councils can enact a single law, invent a single dogma, create a single office, nor institute a single ordinance. They are only interpreters of His statutes; and their functions are purely executive, to enforce what they enjoin. With no discretion except in matters wholly circumstantial, and arrangements of mere outward propriety, theirs is only a *ministry*—exercised for the glory of Christ and the welfare of His Church, and bounded by the limits which He has expressly assigned.

4. *A reciprocal dignity is imparted to each office in their combination.* The Priest is the more venerable as He is a King; the King is the more sacred as He is a Priest. The altar is the stepping-stone to the throne.

The sacrifice upon the one is the more awful, when to the solemnity of the Priest is added the authority of the King: the power wielded from the other is the more commanding, when to the majesty of the King is added the sanctity of the Priest. The crown imparts its splendor to the mitre: the mitre, its holiness to the crown. The crosier blends with the sceptre, combining pastoral care with imperial rule: the one a symbol of authority over the conscience—the other of dominion over the will. The Priest comes with the traces of suffering—the King, with the emblems of triumph. Sympathy breathes in the prayers of the one—protection in the commands of the other. The voice of the one opens with benediction—that of the other pronounces the reward. The Priest symbolizes worship—the King, obedience: and, in their union, worship becomes obedience, and obedience is transformed into worship. Pardon is purchased by the Priest—amnesty is proclaimed by the King: righteousness is wrought by the one—it is given as the wedding garment by the other. In the Priest, we become "a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"—in the King, we become kings with our God, sitting upon thrones and "judging the angels." Each office is glorified by the other, and the value of both is enhanced by their union. In the Priest-King all is found that blood can purchase and power can bestow.

III. "AND HE SHALL BEAR THE GLORY." You have seen the fleecy clouds, cast like flakes of snow upon the azure field of the sky—then suddenly parting asunder and letting the eye into the mellow blue beyond; which opens before the gaze, as though it would admit into the empyrean above—where burns the eternal fire which lights up the universe with its glow. Sight is not hindered, as it pierces through and through; but is simply lost, with the power of thought itself, in the immensity which swallows it up. So there is a rift in the language here, through which the brightness of the upper world streams upon the spiritual sense. We have a word burdened with all the echoes of heaven, "and he shall bear the glory;" in the vastness of which the mind is lost, as the eye in the expanse above. Science takes the white light which floods a hemisphere, and passes it through its prism, that it may detect the rays of which it is composed; but it becomes the light again, when these are recombined as before. Let it not be deemed profane if we pass this glory of the Redeemer through the prism of our thought. The analysis is only designed to afford a higher conception of that glory in the unity to which we must be careful to restore it.

The extent to which I have already drawn upon your patience, forbids

that this should be exhaustively attempted. It would be pleasing, for example, to dwell upon the glory arising from the constitution of the Mediator's person as the God-man, uniting in Himself the two poles of being; to represent again His glory as the head of the prophetical dispensation, the only revealer of God to His intelligent creatures; and to paint the glory reflected upon Him from the joy and bliss of the redeemed in heaven. All this must be reluctantly put aside for the sake of the brevity which I must endeavor to consult. Merely, then, for illustration, and not in the view of any formal exposition, I solicit your attention to the three points which follow:

1. *Christ shall bear the glory accruing from the mediatorial administration of providence.* "All power is given unto me," says Christ, "in heaven and in earth:" and that this grant of universal dominion is made to Him as Mediator, is plain from the fact that He founds upon it the commission to His Church to "go and teach all nations." Again, in His priestly prayer, He says to the Father, "As thou hast given him (the Son) power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." In like manner He affirms, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:" adding, in explanation, "and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." It would be superfluous to multiply testimonies upon the doctrine, that to Christ, the Mediator, authority and dominion are given over the entire universe, to be employed in the administration of His kingdom of grace. To Him, therefore, is committed the whole scheme of providence: a truth which would bring inexpressible comfort to the Christian, were it only apprehended with the same clearness as the doctrines of salvation. It is not strange that unconverted men shrink from a recognition of a providence, which they refer to the absolute God, the frown of whose displeasure they have just reason to dread! But that the Christian should be disconcerted and alarmed at the change of earthly fortune, can be ascribed only to the misconception which separates providence from grace in the kingdom of Christ, their Lord and Head. Surely they, who trust the Redeemer with the interests of eternity, would not fear to commit to Him the embarrassments of time, if they only recognized both as equally under His care. Let this but be understood and practically embraced, and he who commits the soul unto a faithful surety will equally commit the body. The issues of the judgment day will not prove an easier deposit than the supply of to-morrow's bread.

But who shall describe this glory of Christ, as holding in His hand

the threads from which all history is woven? To the glory of power, which in creation called all things out of nothing—to the glory of wisdom, which holds all things in the harmony of perfect adjustment—we must add the glory of goodness, which subordinates both to the purposes of infinite and sovereign grace. The new creation stands forth the climax of the old—the sum and crown of all the works of the Godhead; and both are committed to the providential keeping of the Mediator. Try for a moment to conceive what it involves. The movements of all empires, rising and setting in their relations to His Church, the centre around which they move—the generations, as they come and go, like the flux of matter in the replenishment and waste of the human frame—the history of all individuals, broken into myriads of incidents in the life of each—the record of all beings in all worlds, which science has not fully reckoned in its calendar, and cannot guess by what races they are peopled: all, and immeasurably more, embraced in the comprehensive providence of Him who "sits a priest upon his throne!" Events the most contingent, the most contradictory and stubborn, wrought by His will into the web of His fixed plan—whilst the spontaneous agency of every intelligent creature is recognized in the consciousness of each! And then the mystery which crowns the whole—this vast power wielded by one who wears the form of man! The poor sufferer, who hung in sorrow and anguish upon the cross, is He before whom "every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Shall "the child that is born" be able to bear the weight and glory of "the government laid upon his shoulder?" Ah! He has also another name: He is "the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

2. *Christ bears a glory as the architect of grace, and illustrating the law through His most perfect obedience.* There is no grander conception than that of law. It is the expression of will, which is the origin of force and leads up to the ideas of personality and power. Think of law in its relation to matter—diffused like the atmosphere, bearing with equal pressure in all directions, the expression of a silent will enforced everywhere by an unseen power. How full of grandeur is the thought which thus binds the created universe to the throne of the eternal and the infinite! But how much more solemn is the generalization which extends God's moral law through all worlds: one in its essence over all intelligent beings in heaven and earth, as the expression of a personal and supreme will, and as the regulative standard of all honesty and rightness—only modified in its details, to suit the various circumstances

in which different orders and classes may be placed! What, then, must be the glory of an obedience which is perfectly commensurate with this universal and absolute law—and where is the being who shall render it? Suppose that you aggregate all intelligences into one, build them all into one being of colossal greatness, having in himself the mental capacity and moral worth of the whole universe: his obedience would indeed be sublime, but not exhaustive. You could still measure it in your thought, because it is still finite. It is an obedience that is always continuing—increasing in bulk and value by new accessions—yet never finished. But Christ stood under the law, and rendered an obedience of which He could say "*it is finished:*" an obedience to the law in both its parts, upon the union of which its formal nature depends—an obedience that covered the breadth of the precept, and fathomed the depth of the penalty—an obedience which exhausted the contents of the law, and was its perfect correlate and measure. No wonder that the acceptance of this righteousness by the Father broke the seal upon the Redeemer's grave, and woke Him from the death in which He slept! The pains of death were loosed, "because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." He went into the grave under a judicial sentence, and could rise only under a judicial acquittal. This righteousness in which He rose from the tomb, He bore with Him in His triumphant ascension: and there it hangs forever upon the walls of heaven, reflecting upon the universe the splendor of an infinite and holy law. It is in the brightness of this light that heaven is said to "have no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine upon it." "The glory of God doth lighten it" with the radiance of that holiness which beams from His own nature—and "the Lamb is the light thereof," as catching this radiance upon the mirror of the law, and reflecting it through an obedience which is its counterpart and measure.

It must be borne in mind that grace is not revealed to us simply in the way of didactic exposition. Even as justice and holiness had a potential outworking in the history of angels and men, so must the Redeemer work out in the forge of His own passion and death the principles of grace, and render it a constituent and constructive element in the government of the universe. The glory is His of passing the girdle of love anew around angels and men, and of drawing them up in a nearer and sweeter relation to the eternal Father. All the glory of this grace forms the priestly vesture of the King upon His throne: and in the union of these functions grace is seated as the queen majesty by the side

of law; and reigns with a joint supremacy over a universe, from which the promise is that sin shall be banished forever and ever.

3. *There is, finally, the glory of Christ as the Head of the universal Church, by and through whom a perfect worship is offered unto God.* When the challenge was proclaimed in eternity, "Whom shall I send?" a voice came from the bosom of the Father, saying, "Lo, I come—a body hast thou prepared me." In the fulness of time He unclothed Himself of light, laid aside the garments of praise, sped to earth, and "took upon him the form of a servant." In the sweep of that condescension, He passed through all intermediate grades of being, until He came to man at the bottom of the scale: virtually assuming them to Himself, and laying in His incarnation the foundation of His universal headship. As the reward of His voluntary humility, the Father has "crowned him with glory and honor, and has put all things in subjection under his feet." But the ground upon which it is conferred, is the virtual comprehension of all intelligences in the descent through all to find the lowest. Man, too, as composed of matter and of mind, is a miniature representation or copy of the whole creation; so that by affiliation with him would naturally be established a right to the headship over all.

The principle of grace, moreover, wrought in the furnace of the law, admits of a double application: to sinners in their guilt, for their redemption—to beings that are sinless, for their confirmation in holiness. The latter, though not needing to be redeemed, do require to be exempted from the tests of a continued probation, and to be rendered indefectible forever. This, if ever done, lies beyond the scope of naked law; and is, in the generic sense of the term, a manifestation of grace or favor. Since the law is substantially one over angels as well as men, I see no reason why the grace should not be one, nor why it should not be wrought out, as a working principle, by one and the same agent, in one and the same act of consummate obedience. In its essence it is the same, whether applied to the guilty in their recovery from ruin, or to the pure in preventing their fall into it. It is but the extension, in a new and glorious direction, of a principle that is capable of manifold uses, and which has clearly been wrought as a regulative element into the divine government. But, upon whatever footing we choose to rest it, the revealed fact is—or, rather, the revealed series of facts—that Christ has been made "the head of all principality and power"—that the schism, which sin has made between men and angels, has been healed by the Peacemaker "through the blood of his cross, reconciling all things unto himself—whether they be things in earth or things in heav-

en"—that angels are introduced with the redeemed into the glorified church above, and with responsive praises unite in the worship of God and the Lamb. Of this glorious priesthood the Mediator is the Head. As the long procession, clothed in white, moves along the golden streets in the city of God, the adorable High Priest receives it at the foot of the eternal throne, gathers the united worship into His own censer, and waves it before the infinitely pure and blessed Jehovah. A finite worship is thus transfigured and rendered meet for acceptance even by the dreadful and glorious God.

Where is the saint on earth who is not at times overwhelmed by a sense of defect in the worship which he attempts to offer? Even when that worship is purest, when the heart is at a white heat in the glow of its desires, and when the praise bursts with true sincerity from his lips—still how far short does it fall of rendering the perfections of our Maker, and of meeting the fulness of His claim upon our adoration and love. The reassuring thought is, that the Apostle and High Priest of our profession has for us entered within the vail; that His infinite merit perfumes our poor service; and that He lights the incense of our worship at the fire which burns upon His own altar. How much more blessed the communion of the church above! There saints and angels sing in alternate strains the praise of the unsearchable God; while the High Priest takes the united worship upon His own lips, and translates it into the speech which is never uttered save by the eternal Three in the awful mystery and fellowship of the Godhead.

One general reflection forces itself upon our acceptance: THE UNSPEAKABLE PRECIOUSNESS OF THE GOSPEL, IN ITS ADAPTEDNESS TO THE SINNER'S CASE. By this union of offices in the person of Christ, it is made the POWER of God unto salvation." It gives *redemption*, the full ransom of our souls being paid by our Substitute. This redemption, too, comes not through a hard legal process only, but through an *atoning sacrifice;* thus fulfilling the original idea of man's obedience to the law, as the worship of his whole nature rendered to Him whom that law reveals. It gives to us a Priest whose intercessions must prevail before the throne of infinite justice, because founded upon the exact obedience which that justice demands. He who made the atonement knows its exact extent and measure, and can rise to the height of the argument which is built upon it. It gives a Savior who, by the assumption of our nature, is our *kinsman;* who, by actual experience of human infirmity, is able to sympathize in our weakness and sorrow; and whose official

relation to us binds Him to extend this sympathy in every emergency of life. He is, moreover, a *King*, charged with the administration of the grace which, as Priest, He has wrought out. All the dark dispensations of providence are moulded by Him into a loving discipline. He rules within us by His Spirit, whose constant presence and power prepare us for the joys to come. And He translates us at last, to sit as conquerors upon the thrones which He has placed for us around His own. Through the blessed provisions of this Gospel, "he restoreth our soul, he leadeth us in the paths of righteousness"—"goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life, and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

It is no mere insurance policy against possible future damage or loss; but it is salvation, complete and entire, in all that this word implies of sanctification here and of glory hereafter. And that glory! What is it but an eternal association with Him, whose prayer was "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Surely, it is stark blindness alone which causes this Gospel, with its splendid offers, to be set aside by men who are so keen to observe, and so ambitious to possess, the advantages of this vain world. May God give us grace to "choose the good part which will never be taken away!"

XLVI.

THE ORGANIC UNITY OF THE CHURCH.*

EPHESIANS iv, 16:—"*From whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*"

In this chapter the Apostle discusses the integral unity of the Church of God. All true believers have one Spirit, the Holy Ghost, by whom they are called with one and the same calling, unto one, and the same hope of eternal life. They all have one Lord, whom they receive as their Savior by one and the same faith; which is expressed and sealed in one and the same baptism. They have one God, the Father, who is above all and through all and in all. A clear reference to the Trinity and to the official functions which they discharge in the economy of grace, may be traced in the warp of this language; one Spirit, one Lord, one God; if indeed there be not a trinitarian reference in the words that follow, since God as the Father is *above* all, as the Redeemer is *through* all, and as the Sanctifier is *in* all.

He then proceeds to show that this essential unity of the Church is not impaired by the variety of offices and the difference of gifts requisite to their discharge. He that descended into the dire conflict with the powers of darkness, now from His throne above distributes the spoils of battle. [Verses 8-11.] And He distributes these, not for the glory of each, but for the advantage of all [verse 12]; that we may grow up together in Him who is the Head. Then follows the text, where, under the analogy of the human body, the Apostle presents to our view the unity of the Church. Without pausing upon the several clauses in order to show the force and beauty of this parallel, I deduce two propositions, which I will discuss with all the brevity which their importance will admit:

* Preached at the ordination of Messrs. ALEXANDER HILL, W. H. MATTHEWS, W. T. HARDIE, and CHARLES T. NASH, as Deacons in the First Presbyterian Church, New Orleans.

I. THE INTEGRAL UNITY OF THE CHURCH, ITS CONSTITUENT PARTS FORMING ONE LIVING AND SPIRITUAL ORGANISM; and

II. THE METHOD OF GROWTH, ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF ALL LIFE, BY THE FUNCTIONAL ENERGY WITHIN THE BODY ITSELF.

As to the first of these propositions, it would perhaps surprise you to collate the different passages of Scripture, and to see in how many different forms the absolute unity of the Church is reiterated. There is the similitude of the *family*, in which all the members are related to one common head; the similitude of a *kingdom*, all the wide-spread dependencies of which are under one organic rule; that of a *tree*, all of whose branches spring from a common trunk; that of a *vine*, whose tendrils and whose clusters are nourished by one sap. Pretermitting, however, all these illustrations, take simply two or three direct testimonies from Scripture: as, for example, Romans xii, 4, 5, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Again, Ephesians i, 22, 23, "And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Then, in Colossians ii, 19, "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." And, finally, the twelfth chapter of first Corinthians, which I read to you as the lesson of the morning, in which the analogy to the human body is pushed almost into allegory, and the idea is expanded in its utmost fulness.

Giving, therefore, all due weight to these Scriptural testimonies as the first and greatest of all proofs, let us, my brethren, attend a little to the analogy itself and trace it for ourselves. If any one should undertake to prove the unity of the human frame, he would probably insist on two things: the correlation of the several parts, and the universal distribution of life. He finds the body, for example, divided into the head, the trunk, the limbs. Going over then this rude classification, he discovers particular members in each. In the head, there are the eye, the ear, the nose, the mouth, the lip, the teeth, the tongue, the brain; each performing its appropriate function, but for the benefit of the whole body. So in the trunk, there is the heart—a mighty force-pump, driving the blood to the extremities and receiving it back again through a complex arrangement of arteries and veins, forming a complete system of circulation. There are the lungs, oxygenizing the blood and keeping it pure by the air which we breathe. The whole frame, again, is covered with

a net-work of nerves, centreing at last in the brain; which is the seat of sensation and of motion, and which receives reports from the extremities of the body by means of these telegraphic cords. There is the nice articulation of the joints, bound together by muscles and sinews, which are the instruments of motion, all of them under the direction of the will. Even the minutest subdivisions, as the pores of the skin, perform an important and necessary office for the whole body: and the proof drawn from this co-ordination of all the parts, is absolutely irrefragable as to the unity of the human frame. Equally conclusive is the argument drawn from the universal distribution of life. Call it by what name, or attempt to resolve it into what principle, you please, there it is; present everywhere at once, tingling at the fingers' ends as well as throbbing at the heart. You cannot say of it that it is there and not here; because it is everywhere, and the very instant it is withdrawn, all the parts of the body fall consentaneously into decay and dust. The argument is impregnable; the one life makes the body one.

Now, my hearers, carry the analogy over from the body to the Church in several particulars. Consider,

1. *That the relation of all believers to the Lord Jesus Christ as their common Head, makes them one body in Him.* In this community of relation they become of necessity members one of another. Just as two boys cannot call the same man father, without being at the same time brothers; or as two girls cannot call the same woman aunt, without being at the same time cousins—and so throughout all the ramifications of the most diffused relationship. As the common radii, which diverge from a common centre and are bound within one and the same periphery, belong as parts to one common circle, without which it cannot even be defined: just so it is with the Church. Are you redeemed from the curse by the blood of the Lord Jesus? So am I; and we are *one* by the bond of redemption. Do you rejoice in the sense of pardon and the acceptance of your person with God? So do I; and we are *one* by the bond of justification. Are you renewed by the Holy Ghost, and thus made spiritually alive? So am I; and we are *one* in regeneration. Are you happy in the hope of heaven and its special joys? So am I; and we are *joint heirs* to the same glorious inheritance. And thus with all the privileges of our adoption, as you pass, point by point, around the entire circle of grace. Thus are we brought together into "the household of faith," bound up as one family in Him who is the Head, of the same spiritual lineage, and members necessarily one of another.

2. *The diffusion of the same spiritual life makes all organically one.*

All are quickened by one and the same life, from one and the same death: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." [Ephesians ii, 1.] This one life is communicated from the Holy Ghost, and is maintained in each by His perpetual indwelling and presence. And this one life, which is communicated by one and the same Spirit, has been purchased by the Lord Jesus in His death. It is treasured in Him for the very purpose of being dispensed to His people, and the title of each is the title of all. How, then, can this one life, derived from one and the same Savior, communicated by one and the same Spirit, be diffused throughout the entire Church without making that Church integrally one?

3. *This spiritual life manifests itself in each and in all in the same exercises of soul*—not similar, but the same. It is the same faith—not similar, but the same in quality and in nature, however it may vary in degree. It is the same faith in Zaccheus, hiding himself away in the branches of the tree, as in the jailor at Philippi, subdued by the terrors of the earthquake: the same faith in the despot who rules over half the earth, as in the coarsest hind who plows the soil: the same faith in the sage who reads the history of the geologic ages in the fossils and carbonized fern which he finds in the bowels of the earth; or who measures by his mysterious calculus the flight of the light of a fixed star; or whose weird finger points the crooked lightning along the galvanized cords which whisper the secrets of diplomacy under the ocean's bed to foreign and distant shores; as in the little girl who curls herself in your lap and says, in her infantile simplicity, "It is sweet to die and go to God." It is the same repentance in us, as we bow in sorrow and shame at the foot of the cross, as in the publican beneath the shadow of the temple; or as in the Magdalen, when she washed her Master's feet with her tears. Surely this one life, flowing out from the one Head, communicated by the one Spirit, and which manifests itself in identically the same exercises in all believers alike, makes these members one body in Him.

4. *The Church is one in a common visible fellowship, and the subordination of offices within the same.* What I have said hitherto has reference rather to the *invisible* Church—the Church which embraces the truly regenerate and all who have true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Alas! that the *visible* Church should not be exactly identified with it: because, on the one hand, there are some truly renewed who, for various reasons, are not embraced within her pale; and because, on the other hand, some whom she does embrace even the judgment of charity can-

not accept as the true members of Christ's mystical body—so that, upon this side and upon that side, there is an overlapping. But even this imperfect visible Church has a visible fellowship; as we are witnessing this day, seated together in these heavenly places in Christ Jesus and holding communion through the truth. She has one written charter, which defines all her privileges and which constitutes her a corporate body. She has a prescribed government, and organic laws. She has a living ministry, and sacraments, and seals, and various offices which cannot possibly be discharged except with reference to the benefit of the whole. If this be true of the outward and visible Church, which is but the type of the invisible, how much more true must it be of the latter?

5. *The Church is one body, having, in all ages and under all dispensations, one definite end.* As in the body, all the functional processes look to one single end, nutrition; so with the Church. What is that definite end which the Church, through her whole existence, has constantly had in view? Hear it in the language of the Apostle, Ephesians iii, 10, 21, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God:" "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end." To reveal the unsearchable riches of the glory of God has been the sole object of the Church from the time she was constituted in the family of Abraham, along all the ages until the fulness of time when she was drawn out of the Mosaic dispensation and sent forth upon her grand mission to subdue the nations to the knowledge of Christ. It is not only true of the Church in her earthly and militant state, but it is true of her in her transfigured state as she appears in the heaven of glory: for the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, swell the everlasting song as they cast their crowns before Him that sitteth upon the throne and before the Lamb. Surely if the Church, throughout all the ages of the past and all the dispensations of the future, shall have but this one definite object before her eye, then by the very singleness of her aim is she made one body in Christ.

My brother, if you or I should sometimes wilt under the jeer of the world, when with sneering tone it derides you as a member of the Church; if your patience and courage sometimes ooze away, and you become weary of the simplicity of the Church as compared with the gorgeous splendors of the empires and kingdoms of this world: I ask

you to remember the surpassing honor which is put upon you as a member of this Church of the living Redeemer, identified throughout time and throughout eternity with the manifestation of the great glory of God. Whatever may be the contempt which the world in its ignorance and folly shall cast upon us here, there is a high dignity reserved for us in the kingdom of His glory; when we shall stand by the side of the cherubim and bear upon the wings of our testimony, as upon a chariot, the throne of Jehovah, our King.

II. If, then, the Church of God be one living and spiritual organism, as I have sought to show in these five particulars, we are prepared, in the second place, to consider THE METHOD OF GROWTH, ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF ALL LIFE, BY THE FUNCTIONAL ENERGY WHICH RESIDES WITHIN THIS BODY ITSELF. This proposition I hope to maintain successfully in several theses.

1. *It is true of the individual Christian.* We are Christians as we are in Christ by faith, participating in His death, in His resurrection, in His righteousness. As with the body the life is infused at creation, but after that its growth is attained through functional processes; just so with the soul. The spiritual life is communicated from the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost, and it is maintained in each by that blessed Agent, who is the bond of connection between us and our living Head. This spiritual life, after it has been thus communicated by the divine Spirit, is developed, and spiritual growth is attained, under the fundamental law of nutrition. Just as food is received into the body, is digested, is separated into its chemical elements, is distributed over the whole frame, until it is deposited in every part, where it is perfectly assimilated; just so the truth nourishes the soul, all the faculties of which discharge their separate functions precisely as the bodily organs. The mind perceives and understands; the affections embrace; the will chooses and refuses; habits of holiness are formed, and the believer *grows*. Thus what is true of each member, must be established as true in regard to the whole; for what is true of all the constituent parts, must necessarily be true of the integer which is composed of those parts.

2. *No Christian can attain full spiritual development, except as he is articulated into the body of which he is a member.* It flows from our social nature that no man can attain the perfection which is possible to him, in the isolation of his individual being; for the simple reason, that in such a case there are faculties which are never brought into play, and consequently not subjected to culture; as, for example, the sympathies

and affections. And so thoroughly are our faculties intertwined, that even the perceptive and reasoning powers can only be proportionally developed as they are reacted upon by all the rest. I strike just here a two-fold error—the error of those outside of the Church who reason that, because religion is an individual concern between the soul and God, therefore they have no need of a Christian profession or of Christian affiliation; and the error of mystics within the Church, who retire within themselves, as they say, for meditation and self-culture. Now, however true it may be of both that they are genuine Christians, which I do not at all deny may be possible, yet it is perfectly clear that they cannot attain to full spiritual development in the seclusion of their own being. They are not exercised with the activities of duty, and consequently cannot become spiritually robust; no more than a man can become physically strong, who does not train the muscles of his body. But, to cut the matter short, you will observe in the context [verse 15] the Apostle makes love the very *element* of this growth: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." And then [verse 16] he declares this love, which is the element of our growth, to be the final *consummation* towards which this growth conducts us. But how can there be love except we are co-ordinated? And so what is true of the individual Christian, becomes true alike of the collective Church. The one, as well as the other, must needs grow by the life that resides within; each organ fulfilling its separate function.

3. *The distribution of grace, in limited supply to each, renders it the more indispensable that there shall be communication from each to all.* All discharge not the same offices. Just as with the distribution of the charismata in the early apostolic age, so now. One man has knowledge and the superb faculty of acquiring more—not that he may gloat, like the miser, over his selfish possessions, but that he may distribute from his overflowing fountain to those who are in need. Another has that intuitional logic which, without formal processes, will strip fallacies and detect error; simply in order that he may for his brethren become the "discerner of spirits." A third has that wonderful passive endurance which, by its very tenacity, shall exhaust opposition and triumph simply by its own toughness of purpose. Whilst a fourth is endowed by natural temperament with quick sensibilities and vivid emotions: sometimes gentle and beautiful as the sheet lightning that plays upon the bosom of a summer cloud; and again coming out from the bosom of a deep enthusiasm, and lighting up the earth with its gleam. All these, of different temperament and endowed with their varieties of gifts, are

brought together in the Church, in order that each may, in his own proper sphere, become a "joint of supply;" and that "the whole body by bands and joints having nourishment ministered and knit together, may increase with the increase of God."

Does not this fact, partially at least, explain the wonderful diversity of trials which Christians experience in the world? Brethren, all drink in their turn of one cup, and all must pass in their turn under the baptism of their Master, who was "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." But it does not come precisely in the same shape to every one: and, I suppose for the simple reason that, by participating in each other's experience, we may escape the dire necessity of having all this variety of discipline accumulated upon each of us. Oh! if there were but a larger Christian fellowship; if we could go more into the experiences one of another; if I could bring out all that my sorrows have taught me, and you could bring out all that your trials have taught you, we might perhaps profit by each other's discipline and escape the edge of the sword by which the one or the other has been smitten. The Lord means that this shall constitute one part of the fellowship of His Church; that entering into each other's experience and sharing each other's griefs, there shall not be the stern necessity, on His part, of accumulating upon each and every head the same trials by which others are ground to the earth.

4. *The Church expands by contact, at a thousand points, with the world without.* How singularly is the Church related to that outside world which she seeks to save! There may be in a family but one professedly pious; and most often, blessed be God's grace, that one is the wife and the mother. Oh! if she understands her function, what an angel of God is she to that household! What would have become of this shattered world, if God had not marvellously placed the pious women in it to rescue it from destruction! When the husband, plunged in the vortex of business, finds every thought of every day absorbed in the world, she, whom the blessed Savior has invested with a holy and peculiar priesthood, in the silence of her closet stands like the priests of old between the living and the dead, and by her intercession turns away the avenging stroke. And as the little ones gather around her knee, she, the priestess of God in that churchly home, puts upon the infant lips the "Our Father, which art in heaven;" and by her holy example leads their young feet in the paths of righteousness, which they afterwards find to be paths of peace. I range my eye over the men in this house; and though I know not their individual histories, yet if I should

put them under the sanction of an oath, each man I presume would lay his hand solemnly on his heart and declare that he is what he is, first by the grace of God, and then through the influence of a godly mother, who may perhaps at this moment be hymning her praises before the everlasting throne.

If you pass from the circle of the family into the wider region that is beyond, how strangely the Church, in all the divisions of society, is related to the world! Here it is a lawyer. My brethren, look at the solemn crape which festoons this pulpit, and understand the nature of the influence which one good man will throw as an ægis over the members of the same profession with him; and by reason of that intercourse which he holds with them as a class, shall whisper the great secrets of God and of His salvation into ears that would have been closed against every other voice. Then again it is the merchant; whose tender conscience, like the sensitive plant, closes at the first approach of temptation, and evinces how possible it is amidst all the exactions of business to lead an honest life before the world. I do not know how you, who belong to commercial life, feel in regard to it; but certainly I feel only a burning resentment on your behalf, when it is whispered that in the transactions of trade an unstained conscience and a pure heart cannot be preserved before God. Again it will be the physician; who, as he places his finger upon the pulse of his patient, lifts his heart to Him who is the author and controller of life and invokes His blessing upon the sufferer—and who sometimes becomes God's special voice to the dying in the chambers of dissipation and vice, where, alas! the man in black is most rigidly excluded. Thus it is through all the ramifications of society, the electrical influence shoots along these lines of connection, and the world is brought into sweet relations with the Church. A holy influence takes hold upon vice in its extremest forms: and the world becomes leavened with the knowledge of God and the Gospel.

5. *The new material, which is gathered into the Church, takes the form and hue of the antecedent piety which it finds there.* The law of assimilation, which is involved in this, is indispensable in order to save from destruction. My brethren, do we fully realize what we mean when we ask God to pour His blessing upon the Church, and gather hundreds upon hundreds within her communion? Go into the forest and undermine the oak, which for a hundred years has been lifting its head to the clouds; and you will discover that there is an ordained proportion between the root and the branch—that, with mathematical accuracy, the intelligent Builder has applied the measuring line year by year, and

month by month, to all the parts of its gigantic form—the length of the root determining the length of the branch, with a careful adjustment of both to the girth of the trunk. What, if that tree should grow more on top than below! What, if that tree should shoot out its arms, on every side, wider and wider, and be laden with the leaf and with the fruit, without a corresponding growth in the root beneath the soil! What, but that it becomes the victim of the first hurricane that passes over its head! Top-heavy by its own overgrowth, it is hurled a deformed ruin upon the ground, disclosing in its stinted roots the reason of its overthrow. My brethren, it *is* possible to have a top-heavy Church—a Church that shall gather more into her bosom than she has piety to mould. I apprehend that the God of grace sometimes in His very mercy denies the prayer with which the heart is throbbing, when we are asking Him to bring the hundreds and the thousands within the communion of the Church, who shall bear their testimony with ours to the riches and power of His grace. When you and I, in the closet or in the sanctuary, spread forth our hands in prayer for the enlargement of the Church, let us understand that a true revival of religion sends the life down into the root no less than into the branches above; and that there can be no growth in tree or Church, which is not a growth from beneath upward. What an illustration have I given you of the functional life which is in the Church! What a process, by which the life that resides in the Church takes hold of the new material brought within it, assimilates it to itself, and causes the piety of the young member to take both shape and color from that already existing in the body!

The exhortation is urgent from a subject like this, upon every Christian conscience in this assembly; that each, in the effectual working in every part, may contribute to the growth of all. But this general application must give way to a more special application to the service which is before us. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administration, but the same Lord." He who ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, giving gifts unto men, gave "first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues"—all being one common body, but "members in particular." You have this distribution of office, and this distribution of gifts, exemplified in the ordination services of this Sabbath placed alongside of the Sabbath two weeks ago. At that time, men chosen by the Head of the Church, through the voice of the people, were set apart by ordination to the

office of ruler; and now men chosen by the voice of the people, which is the voice of Christ, are to be set apart to engage in the office of distribution.

I have time in this connection only to suggest two principal thoughts. The first is, that the deacon becomes officially the organ of the Church in that part of her Christian fellowship which consists in joint participation of earthly substance. Examine, if you please, the Scriptures in which this fellowship of the early Church is described with fulness, and you will find that to no small degree it was a fellowship not merely in the word, but in "the breaking of bread." There is large significance in that incident in the apostolic history, where spontaneously, without commandment either from the Church's Head or from the Apostles, the disciples brought their goods, laid them down at the Apostle's feet, and had all things in common—neither did any man say that the things were his own—typical of that fellowship which is to be maintained between all the members of the Lord's flock, not only in prayer, not only in the word, not only in the holy sacrament of the Supper, but in the cup of cold water which shall be given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, and which will carry with it a disciple's reward. But this organized fellowship in the distribution of the substance of God's people needs protection, lest some creep into the Church only for the loaves and fishes. Although the diaconal office seems in the first instance to have grown upon an occasion, it was an occasion which developed the fixed purpose of the Church's Head to create an arm of the public service, whose function should be, in taking care of the poor and ministering to their wants, not only to distribute the substance, but to see that this distribution is not the distribution of a charity, but an outworking of the true fellowship of the Church on earth. When you, on sacramental Sabbaths, give to the poor that live partly upon your bounty, it is no charity; it is no alms; it is spiritual fellowship, in your gold and in your silver, with those to whom the same Lord has denied what He has given to you. When they who are the members of the same Head with yourself, who hold by the same faith with yourself, who are joint-heirs with you to the same inheritance, come in their biting and searching want; and when you from your fulness supply that which will feed and clothe, you are but exhibiting, in one of its forms, the "communion of the saints." You make them partakers of your substance, even as you make them partakers of your affections. Oh! that we could, in our thinking, sanctify in the Church of God what we do in communion and fellowship with the Lord's poor! whom He places in our bosom, saying, "For ye

have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye have not always."

Then, take another view. The gold and the silver, the cattle upon a thousand hills, to whom do they belong? Is there a Christian in all this assembly who will venture, in the presence of God, to say that aught of the things which he possesses is his own, however they may be held under the tenure of human rights? Nay, rather, he holds all that is in his hand under the gift of the Giver. We worship God, in whom we live and move and have our being; we worship Him who has redeemed us with His own precious blood; and we worship Him who has renewed us by His saving power: We worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, not only in these psalms of praise and in these accents of prayer, but as well in the consecration of our substance. That generous Lord, who invests His stewards with a large and pleasant discretion, will at the last bring each of them to a strict account of that very discretion—a discretion, not to absorb into their own use and self-indulgence the property of their Lord; but that His substance shall be put to usury, so that when He comes they may say, "Lord, thou gavest unto us five talents; we have gained besides them five talents more"—and that He may reply, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; that hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee rule over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Oh! ye rich men of the earth—perhaps there are few here whom these years of shrinkage and oppression have not been stripping of their gains, and bringing some to the pinch of want—but if I could sound the appeal to all the wealthy of the earth, I would say it is nobler and sweeter to make investments above, to have prizes that are imperishable there, to gather into their crowns stars which shall shine forever, than to enjoy all the pomps and luxuries of this perishing world.

But however this may be, the same Lord who exacts one-seventh of our time, which He consecrates as a Sabbath to Himself, demands that a portion of our substance shall be yielded as a cheerful offering unto Him that gave it. And now to the deacons, as the anointed and ordained arm of that service, belongs the high duty of training the Church of God to a proper liberality in all the enterprises in which the Church herself shall engage. As we scan the tables in the records of the Church, and see those vacant columns which stare us in the face, the relief of all this disaster is instrumentally to be found in the proper exercise of the diaconal function. In all the scattered churches of our land, let the deacons but perform their office in serving the Lord's table,

the table of the poor, and become the arm of distribution to send the Gospel to the distant heathen—in addition to a faithful eldership shepherdizing the flock, and a devout ministry bringing forth from the treasury things new and old for the enlightenment of the people, let there be an efficient deaconship going to every member of the Church and bringing the question of personal duty as to the support of the Gospel at home and abroad—in this instrumentality are we to find the great cure of the evil which, at least most peculiarly in this dark day, oppresses our Southern Church.

Do you wonder then, brethren, of the deaconship, that Paul, in describing your office and the qualifications for it, should not depart from the terms in which he had previously defined the eldership? "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." [I Timothy iii, 8-13.] I need not expand more fully the nature and the duties of the office than by the recital of these words. I can only add that, if any trembling conscience shrinks from the assumption of these responsibilities, let it be encouraged by the sweet promise with which this very injunction closes—that those who use this office well, in the fear of God and in reliance upon the divine strength, "purchase to themselves *a good degree.*" What the degrees are in this scale of honor, it is not needful that we should know here. But when the faithful, who have served in their generation, are gathered to the reward above, they will find a prize worthy of their loftiest ambition, and full compensation for all the sacrifices of time and ease which were made in the acquisition.

XLVII.

THE TRINITY OF GRACES.

A COMMEMORATIVE DISCOURSE.*

Exactly five weeks ago a venerable man of God entered gently into rest. Having gathered the household around him, in the evening prayer, as his wont was, praying for each according to the case of each, with that fulness of petition we all remember well—he composed his limbs in sleep. During the solemn night, when stillness and peace reigned throughout a Christian home, the angels came and bore him upward on their wings. Before the dawn of the morning he had awaked before the splendors of the throne.

Impenitent sinner, to you it would have been dreadful to be rushed thus, without warning, into the presence of your Judge: but to him who had so long been able, with "Paul the aged," to say, "For I am now ready to be offered," the call was easy to be obeyed. No shadow upon those placid features, no wrinkle of the clothing of the bed, no tightening of the fingers or clenching of the hand, indicated aught of struggle with the last enemy. In the posture most familiar to him in sleep, with his grey hairs floating over the still whiter pillow, he lay like a chiselled statue fresh from the hands of the artist; and, like a statue, insensible to the wail of grief which burst from his distracted household. The harmonies were beautifully preserved in this gentle translation of one whose life had been laborious and useful. He lay down upon the evening of the Sabbath, and dreamed of heaven; and at once the dream ripened into the blissful reality. Like Enoch, he had "walked with God;" and, like Enoch, he "was not, for God took him." No human eye looked in profanely upon that scene of transfiguration. No tear of sad farewell stained that aged cheek. No whisper of sorrowing sympa-

* On Sabbath night, May 14, 1876, Mr. JOSEPH A. MAYBIN, the Senior Elder of the First Presbyterian Church, passed in sleep to his eternal home—having reached the advanced age of eighty-one years. His eminent services to the Church of God rendered proper this public tribute to his life and character.

thy for those left behind lingered upon his lip. No earthly element intruded into the awful sanctities of that hour. Only he and his Lord were together, in the lone midnight: and the voice, which had for fifty years spoken to him the promises, breathed softly into his ear, "Said I not unto you that, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also?" Blessed chamber of rest, where the sleep of the night was the "sleep in Jesus;" and the waking was the waking of the eternal day.

Should it occur to this church to set a monumental slab upon the wall of this sanctuary, as a fitting memorial of one whose ministerial service dates back almost to her origin—beneath the honored name and the dates of his official career, I would have traced simply these words:

"Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." [I Thessalonians i, 3.]

And from these words I propose to say what may seem most fitting of this venerable father in Israel; for whose death this symbol of public mourning has for five Sabbaths draped this pulpit in solemn black. "Remembering,' says Paul, "without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."

Perhaps nowhere than in the salutations and introductions of Paul's epistles are his personal characteristics more conspicuously revealed—showing plainly that inspiration is no mechanical process, simply shoving the hand along as an unintelligent medium of communication from an unseen spiritual power. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit mysteriously brings His divine influence to bear upon the whole mind of the writer; lifting its faculties indeed to a far higher plane, yet leaving them in the utmost freedom of their action, so as to stamp upon the record all the mental and moral characteristics of the writer. Turn as you may the pages of the New Testament, and in their respective writings you meet everywhere the "image and superscription" of the author—the intense practicalness of James, the generous fervor of Peter, the mystical intuition of John, and the passionate logic of Paul. Not only so; but all through these epistles, and more particularly in their introduction, do you find exhibited the exact type of their individual piety and the definite form in which the Christian experience of each was cast. In the recorded prayers, for example, of the Apostle Paul, who was the great champion and expounder of the doctrines of grace, you find these doctrines drawn out—and that not in cold didactic statement, as the parts

of an articulate creed, but as blessed facts lying potentially in the experience of God's children.

Of this we have a beautiful illustration in the text—where is mapped out the whole Christian life under the three-fold classification of faith, love and hope—the trinity of graces so exquisitely delineated in the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians, which was read as the Scripture lesson of the morning. Allow me, then, in simple exposition, to bring out these three terms in the relation in which they stand to each other; giving to you a perfect portraiture of a Christian man, and as concretely illustrated in the example and life of our venerable Elder.

I. "YOUR WORK OF FAITH." Mark, my hearers—not *works*, as though broken up into separate and detached parts, over which you pass in quick succession, and by an act of generalization bring together and aggregate as a whole. It is presented in the absolute singular—"your *work* of faith"—as being an undivided whole, a continuous career of activity. And then it is interesting to see how this undivided *work* of the Christian stands related to the *faith* out of which it springs.

1. This work is one and continuous, just because it is the production of the life which must always indicate itself in movement and in effort. Wherever there is life there is movement. This is true of the body. Even in the moments when deep sleep oppresses the man, the vital organs continue silently to discharge their necessary functions. The heart, with its unceasing pulsations; the lungs, ever heaving and throbbing within; the blood, ever flowing through the arteries and veins, circulating over the entire system; and the whole process of assimilation and digestion replenishing the waste of the animal frame, which is not suspended even in repose. Through the absence of the reporter, these processes may not be revealed in consciousness; yet the instant nature has been refreshed, this reporter takes his seat and man awakes to all the activities of the busy world. The principle holds true of the spiritual, as it does of the natural or physical, life. The life which is implanted within us by the Holy Ghost, which is the spring of all the movement and activity of the renewed soul, makes continuous effort—one steady, unbroken life work. The work, in so far as it springs out of the life, is as singular as the life which produces it.

Now, my brethren, need I pause to tell you that this life was, in the first instance, purchased for us by the Lord Jesus Christ in His death? It was the life which God in the beginning gave to man when he was created in His own image. It was the life which man forfeited in the hour of transgression, and which now is covered by the curse. But

when the Redeemer came as the substitute for the guilty, He bought back the forfeited life, which henceforth is treasured in Him, to be dispensed to all whom He has redeemed with His blood. This life becomes ours through the instrumentality of faith. The first exhibition of it is the faith which lays its hand upon Jesus, the storehouse in whom it is treasured; and the whole movement of the life, until we are caught up and transfigured into the glory that is beyond, springs from that principle of faith by which our "life is hid with Christ in God." With the strictest scientific precision does the Apostle declare, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Your faith is from first to last the very pulse of the Christian life within you. The first throb of that life was in the act which first received Christ Jesus the Lord; and the last is when the dying saint casts his believing eye upon the cross, and faith is forever lost in sight.

You see, then, why the Apostle should describe the *work* of the Christian as the "work of faith." It is the continuous product of the spiritual life, which is treasured in Christ and is communicated by the Holy Ghost. All that is necessary is to integrate us into Christ, from whom the life is derived—the bond of connection, on our part, being that personal faith which accepts the Redeemer in all His offices, and which, therefore, becomes the root of our obedience.

2. It is called the "work of faith" as being the dim reflection of the perfect righteousness of our Head, which is appropriated by faith. The justification of the believer is real, and not simply apparent. All the judgments of God are according to truth, and there can be nothing fictitious in the divine administration. That is to say, the sinner is pardoned upon the ground that guilt is no longer chargeable upon him; and his person is accepted before God upon the ground of a righteousness that is absolute and perfect. It is not, as sometimes equivocally asserted, that God treats as righteous those who are not really such—as though the whole matter were a fiction of law. But He declares us righteous because we are righteous. And yet our consciousness bears the most fearful testimony that our transgressions are our own, for which we are personally responsible before the divine tribunal. How, then, shall they be so not charged to our account, that God may give to us an absolute pardon? The Gospel reveals the whole method in the substitution of Jesus Christ, the just for the unjust. "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" [II Cor. v, 21]: "the Lord hath laid on him the ini-

quity of us all." [Isaiah liii, 6.] When He, the mighty sin-bearer, stood for us upon the altar of sacrifice, our sins were reckoned to Him, and cannot therefore be reckoned to us. They were laid upon Him, and we are discharged from the guilt: and when the Father looks upon the suffering substitute, He pronounces the free pardon of him for whom that vicarious punishment was endured. Because this Redeemer has wrought a complete righteousness, this obedience is so reckoned to us that we stand perfectly justified before God.

Now this obedience of Christ, our surety, is one and singular. Whether you look upon it as *active*, that is to say, as rendered to the precepts of the law—or whether you regard it as *passive*, that is to say, as rendered to the penalty—it is *one* obedience throughout. This obedience we are able to make our own, by faith. Faith, therefore, is our response to the whole atonement of our blessed Lord. Here, unquestionably, is the secret of the amazing boldness with which we approach the throne of grace, that we have a perfect plea with which to meet the interrogations of justice and of law. And here, too, is the secret of that repose which always accrues upon the exercise of faith—"the peace which passeth all understanding." Yet here is the paradox: a peace fills the spirit with unutterable comfort, which is founded upon an obedience we have never wrought, upon a sacrifice we have never offered. As creatures of law, we are obliged to recognize our responsibility in the use of the faculties with which we are endowed; and it is difficult to see how peace shall steal into the heart through the righteousness of another. The solution of the difficulty is this: Faith is such an exercise of the human soul as draws upon all its powers alike. In all its degrees, high or low, it lays every faculty under tribute. As the whole nature goes out in the act, there is just that sense of *property* in what is embraced, which would ensue if it were the product of our own labor. The righteousness of another becomes really our own, because in the appropriation of it the entire nature of the recipient has found the expression of itself. The conviction of individual possession comes to us through this exercise of faith, just as the feeling of proprietorship attaches to the work of our own hands. A machine is yours, because you have made it—it stands before you the embodiment of your thought and toil. So the righteousness of Christ is a work, in the acceptance of which you have made a solid investment of all the properties of your intellectual and moral being—which gives to you the feeling that it is *yours*, as truly as if it had been wrought by your own power.

It only remains to be added that, being justified through this perfect

righteousness of our surety, which we are warranted to plead as *our* righteousness in the sense explained above—we seek, in our sphere and according to the measure of the grace given us, to reproduce and to reflect it in the obedience which we ourselves render. The law which our Head has magnified by His obedience which is perfect, He binds upon us as the law of His kingdom; and the imperfect obedience which we render, not as the price of our pardon, but as the free expression of our loyalty and love, fashions itself upon the pattern which He has set for our imitation. This reflected obedience becomes, therefore, our life-work, having its root in faith.

3. The life, out of which the work springs, meets continual resistance; it must, therefore, always strive, or perish. The proposition holds true of the physical life, that it is maintained through conflict. All the bodily organs tend to decay, and wear out through the constant friction of the machinery. A thousand hungry diseases hang around our path, springing upon us like the lion and the leopard from the jungles of India. The very air we breathe is loaded with the seeds of death. The heart throbs, the lungs heave, the blood circulates, under a measure of oppression. Life is maintained only by ceaseless conflict with the forces which are warring against it. And is there a Christian upon earth who does not know, from bitter experience, the fierce contest of the spiritual life against the world, the flesh, and the devil? How ceaseless the strife with the temptations which this vain world presents! How constant, how subtle and malignant the suggestions, which come from the great adversary who will harass where he cannot destroy! And this "law of sin in our members" warring against the law of the mind, these corrupt and carnal desires—how often they force from us the bitter cry of the Apostle, "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" There is not a moment in the history of the Christian when the life within him can afford to slumber. There is no stage in his experience when its utmost activity is not required to keep it from being overwhelmed by opposing forces. The life, then, being ceaselessly active, puts us upon the performance of a continuous work. And as this life roots itself in Christ, it is constantly renewed by communications from Him through the faith which knits us to His glorious and living person. Its true description, then, must always remain, as in the text, "*your work of faith.*"

II. We must hasten to the second clause, "YOUR LABOR OF LOVE." Here again the word is singular, not plural; the "labor" is one, undivided whole, for the reason we have already considered. You will per-

ceive, too, its intensity. Work, although constant, may nevertheless be simple and easy; but labor involves toil and fatigue, and, of course, includes the ideas of self-denial and of sacrifice. This labor, however exhausting, is here represented as being accomplished by *love*—that love in the renewed soul, which is the echo of God's love to it in the grace of redemption. What, then, is the connection between the two?

1. Love is the motive which prompts the labor. It is in the affections that motive power is found: compared often to the sails of a ship filled with the breeze that wafts it over the sea—and to the wings of a bird which, beating the air, cause the eagle to mount into the face of the sun. It is not enough merely to perceive the true, the beautiful and the good. Desire must be awakened. Not only the intellectual, but the emotional nature must be stirred. The affections must move towards that which the understanding recognizes, and the judgment approves: and under their influence the will puts forth its choice, which concretes at last in the determinate and proper action. Hence all Christian labor is accomplished under the constraining power of Christian love.

And now, my brethren, God secures to Himself the glory of His grace, in that the love under which this labor is wrought is a love inspired by Him, as well as a love directed exclusively to Him. As the "*work*" springs out of the life which He bestows, so the "*labor*" is performed under the influence of the love which His own beauty and glory excite in the soul; which, by the constancy of its pressure, prevents the energy from being wasted in casual and fitful efforts, but concentrates it upon a given end and transforms the work into labor.

2. As love prompts, so again it sweetens the toil. Nothing but this takes away the drudgery of service, and makes duty its own reward. In the domestic relations, for example, how is the weariness of toil relieved, and the corrosion of care softened, when both are endured for those upon whom the deepest affections rest! We can turn in no direction without detecting this infusion of grace into the whole discipline of life. The sting is taken from the curse of labor, when it is wrought in love; our very solicitude and tendance become a joy, when the ministry is to those in whom we delight; and the bitterness is gone out of bereavement itself, as we follow our cherished ones in their ascension to the upper day.

Now God conditions His Church, that she has her sphere of sacrifice and toil. We wonder often that it should be so, when it would be easy to spare her the anguish of so many convulsive and fatiguing efforts to bring the world to the knowledge of the truth. But so it is; and the

discipline we shall one day see to be gracious and wise. But love sweetens the task—and those who engage earnestly in it find many a love token from the Master, prophetic of the final benediction, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

3. This leads directly to the thought I had designed to emphasize separately: that in all the labor and sacrifice of love, we lay up investments in heaven. "Charge them that are rich," says Paul, "that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." [I Timothy vi, 17-19.] Love gives the foretaste of this. It is not unrequited toil even here. The expenditure enriches. It all goes to the building up of that kingdom which is an everlasting kingdom. We are increasing the capital which shall be ours in the great hereafter, and which we already enjoy in the anticipation of hope. But this opens,

III. The third clause of the text, "YOUR PATIENCE OF HOPE." The passive virtues are exalted, in Scripture, above the active; and the perfection of Christian character is placed in these. "The trying of your faith worketh patience," says the Apostle; who adds, "but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." [James i, 3, 4.] This is against human philosophy, which exaggerates the qualities that are more obtrusive, and disparages such as display a less conspicuous part in the world's history. But the genius of Christianity requires the graces of humility, gentleness, meekness, temperance, faith, patience and hope; which, accordingly, are canonized as the highest virtues of the Christian life. It is not difficult to assign the reasons for this judgment. It arises,

1. From the fact that God alone is the true measure of all things, not man: the one is exalted, the other is abased. The fundamental mistake under which the world labors is thus corrected. He who made all things, must be the standard to which they shall be referred, and His glory must be the end of all existence. If His will be supreme, then our highest duty is submission. The faith which accepts His testimony, the humility which bows before His majesty, the fortitude that sustains His discipline, the patience that abides His time, and the hope which anticipates His reward—these are the qualities which eternity shall approve, in respect to which the judgments of men will hereafter experience a strange reversal.

2. The present life is one of discipline. The education is for eternity; and hope, with its attendant patience, must be the characteristic

of a religion that so distinctly embraces the future. "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." [Romans viii, 24, 25.]

3. Our Redeemer was made perfect through suffering; and we, in this sense, drink of His cup and receive of His baptism. And as He looked at "the glory that should follow," so His children look not at the things that are seen and temporal, but at those which are unseen and eternal. There is no path to heaven but that trodden by our Fore-runner; and the marks by which we trace it are His blessed footprints. His was the cross: and our patience is but the staying under it, until with us, as with Him, the cross shall be transfigured into the crown, and we shall behold his glory.

It is therefore with emphasis that Paul, in the next clause, connects this "patience of hope" with the person of Christ as its immediate object. It is a hope that looks with expectation for His second coming —"looking," says the Apostle elsewhere, "for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" [Titus ii, 13]; "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe." [II Thess. i, 10.] Whilst, finally, the whole series of thoughts is clinched with a reference to the supreme authority of the Father—"*in the sight of God and our Father.*" All is wrought—the work, the labor, the patience—in the felt presence of God, under a sense of His authority, and in view of His gracious, covenant relation as our Father.

Is not this the proper epitaph of the venerable patriarch whose virtues we to-day commemorate with sorrow and yet with joy? Who, better than he, illustrated this trinity of graces; which have been happily pronounced "the root, the stem, and the crown of the Christian life?" What terms can more tersely describe his public career than those of the text—his "work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ?" Suffer a brief delineation of his character and services, as the special application of this discourse.

Mr. MAYBIN was born in the city of Philadelphia, on the 6th of March, 1795. He was therefore "gathered to his fathers" when just a little past his eighty-first year. His father is represented as a man exemplary in his deportment, public-spirited, kind, and charitable to the last degree—with an abiding reverence for the Bible as the inspired word of God—waiting constantly upon the ministry of the Presbyterian

Church, which was the church of his preference—but never connected with it as a communicating member. His mother was an eminently pious woman, and a member of the Moravian Church—a body of Christians distinguished above others for the simplicity of their character and life, and by their intense devotion to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. Indeed, as a distinct organization, it had its origin in the missionary zeal which sought to expend its entire energies in the propagation of Christianity throughout the earth. I am not sure that some of Mr. MAYBIN'S distinguishing traits may not be traced to this extraction from a Moravian mother and to her inculcation of the Moravian tenets.

Having laid a good foundation in English scholarship, he began his classical studies at the age of twelve years; and at sixteen he was matriculated in Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa., entering the Junior Class, and graduated with high honor at the age of eighteen. A somewhat unusual distinction was soon after conferred upon him through the intervention of friends, who procured the complimentary degree of Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University; although he had been previously admitted to the same by his Alma Mater. It was a pleasant testimonial, however, to his scholarship, so well known to all who recall his affectionate allusions to the ancient classics in private conversation, and as they often glittered in his public addresses.

Immediately after graduation he entered upon the study of the law; which he prosecuted for three years under the auspices of that excellent jurist, Hon. HORACE BINNEY—and was admitted to practice at the Philadelphia bar in 1816. In the latter part of the same year, or in the early part of the next, he became a resident of this city; which, therefore, has been his home for a period of sixty years. Finding the code of practice differing in Louisiana from that of the other States, he put himself for six months under the special instruction of the Hon. A. L. DUNCAN; and was admitted upon examination to the courts of this State, on the 5th of June, 1817. His first appearance as an advocate was at Baton Rouge, whither he was drawn by the epidemic of that year, in a difficult criminal case; in which, his maiden effort, he acquired honor. This is not the hour or the place, however, for tracing minutely his professional career. It may be sufficient to mention, as mere links in his history, that in 1837 the office of Judge of the supreme bench of Louisiana was tendered him by Gov. Edward White, which he declined. In 1841, adhering to his purpose of refusing civil office, he resisted the importunities of friends who sought to bring him forward for the office

of District Judge of the United States for the District of Louisiana. All this is in evidence of the reputation he had gained for legal learning and ability.

Mr. MAYBIN was identified with the reform in the educational interest of this city, from the time it was inaugurated in 1841; and was foremost in the number of those who devised the admirable system which has so long been our boast, and which sought to combine the most approved methods both of the New England and the Prussian discipline. For nine years he was chairman of the committee on teachers, discharging that delicate trust with conscientious fidelity—never permitting himself to be swayed by religious or political bias, inflexible only as to the competency of the applicants. He served with equal fidelity, during those years, upon the committees of visitation and supervision. Especially is he to be regarded the founder of the Girls' High School. Upon the establishment of that for boys, he would not rest till another of like grade should be instituted for the other sex; and through many years watched over its interests with intelligent and untiring vigilance. His public spirit was equally displayed in the erection of houses of refuge for the reclamation of juvenile delinquents. For eight years, under the appointment of the Council, he was commissioner for these institutions in the second municipality; and through a period of nine years it was his habit on every Sabbath afternoon to read and explain the sacred Scriptures in the Girls' House of Refuge. He was, of course, even more closely identified with all the religious movements in this city—being for many years, up to the hour of his death, the President of the South-Western Bible Society, always active and interested in the operations of that benevolent religious agency. He bore a conspicuous part also in all the efforts to bring the Gospel and the restraints of a Christian home to the seamen of this port.

Before dismissing this brief account of his general public career, it will not be ungracious to delineate Mr. MAYBIN'S intellectual characteristics. He was endowed by the Creator with a vigorous understanding, disciplined in early life by severe culture. It was not only comprehensive in its grasp, but of exceeding activity and fertile of invention. His fancy was exuberant, bounding forward in the use of impressive and sometimes startling metaphors—not chosen so much for their rhetoric, but for their force in conveying the strength of his own passion, and overwhelming opposition by their massive weight. His mind possessed also a certain quality of minuteness, which descended easily into the most delicate details. This rare combination of the comprehensive with

the minute, rendered him formidable in the forum—it being equally easy to grasp the great constitutive principles which determine every public question, and at the same time adroitly to marshal the details of a case—and thus to meet all the requirements of dialectic skill. One of his most remarkable mental features was his memory, whose power of retention almost surpassed belief. It was no doubt developed into its extraordinary proportions by the partial blindness which came upon him in middle life—and was a complete illustration of the indefinite extent to which the powers of the mind, especially that of memory, which is the most mechanical, may be cultivated under a compulsory discipline. Those familiar with him were constantly astonished at the facility with which he would reproduce his old stores of knowledge; and especially the accuracy with which he would recite historical events with the precise date of their occurrence. Compelled to rely upon the assistance of others in reading to him the authorities, the freedom and fulness of his references to them in his professional pleadings excited the wonder of the court and of his brethren at the bar. In consequence of this amazingly developed faculty, few men ever had their knowledge so completely at command: and the necessary mental activity which this imposed, contributed to preserve the freshness and vigor of his mind unimpaired to the last. His was a sweet illustration of the fact that there is no necessity of growing old, to those who have learned the secret of keeping the mind young and the heart warm.

The symmetry of a memoir has required the general sketch which I have already given. But I turn with pleasure to the contemplation of his religious character, as most befitting the solemnities of this hour. Although religiously educated by a pious mother, who was accustomed fondly to say that she "had faith that Joseph would one day preach the Gospel," he remained unconverted during the first thirty years of his life. Indeed, according to his own testimony and that of others, he was to an unusual degree profane and godless. Though not addicted to any special vice, he was the ringleader of others in revelry and folly. His innate fondness for sport led him, I suppose without malignity against God, sometimes to travesty the rites of our holy religion—a form of wickedness from which most men are restrained by a sense of awe. With him, the unconquerable spirit of fun, with a certain feeling of intellectual superiority over his comrades, induced him to impart a zest to their pleasures by mock preaching and the like. I dare not suppress the reference to this fact; for with the honesty that was characteristic of him, he would not allow me to mention his name in these sacred

services without holding him up as an example of one saved as by fire. He always recurred to it himself with deep humility, proclaiming that he was conspicuously a "brand plucked from the burning." He would desire me, in fidelity to him and in fidelity to truth, to represent to the unconverted in this assembly that those who are saved by the grace of Almighty God are all of them men of like passions with themselves. Oh! my unconverted hearers, the worst of you, I suppose, are not as bad as many of us have been. I have no idea that there is one in all this assembly who has ever been, in the worst crisis of his history, the guilty and the blaspheming wretch, that he was at eighteen years of age who this morning addresses to you the Gospel of the grace of God. It is right that those who have been snatched from the very jaws of hell by the supreme grace of God, should openly testify of God's willingness to save the chiefest of sinners.

In 1825 it pleased God to enter Mr. MAYBIN'S home and to take away an infant child. Ah! it is in the secresy of our home that our truest character is revealed. It is not possible to wear a mask there: and all the affectionateness and generosity of this good man's soul came out amidst the endearments of his home. He was a loving father, bound by ties of strong affection and constant self-sacrifice to the offspring of his loins; and when, at an early period in his married life, this little flower withered upon its stem, for weeks and for months he could not refrain from weeping as often as the tender memories were stirred in his heart. This first led him to consider his relations to God, and to recognize his exceeding sinfulness in the sight of the law which he had broken. His convictions must, however, have matured slowly; for it was not until three years after, in 1828, that he became by public profession a member of the Christian Church. So conspicuous and entire was the change, however, that almost simultaneously with his admission into the Church, he was, with his friend and compeer, ALFRED HENNEN, ordained to the office of the eldership. Thus his whole Christian life has coincided with his official career, as an elder in the house of God.

From the moment of his conversion and ordination to this sacred office, he entered upon the discharge of its duties with a constancy and fidelity, a conscientiousness and a zeal to which thousands in this city are able to bear their testimony. As a member of the Session, Mr. MAYBIN was always pleasant. His colleagues will bear witness not only to his uniform, but to his most singular, courtesy. He was a nobleman by nature, and still more by grace. That sweet injunction of the Scriptures which, if obeyed, would make every Christian man a true gentleman,

"be courteous," was lodged in the centre of his heart; and in the transactions of every day his whole career was distinguished by this perfect and princely courtesy. But what I desire to signalize in his intercourse with his brethren of the Session, was the remarkable combination of conscientiousness in adhering to the opinions which he had himself formed, with the exquisite judgment which enabled him to recognize precisely the point at which opposition becomes factious. Whilst not swerving from his own convictions, he would with perfect grace yield to the judgment of his brethren; and always, with singular loyalty to the court of which he was a member, sought to carry out the decisions of the majority.

But it was in the discharge of the episcopal function of the elder, in the going from house to house and preaching the Gospel to all whom he met, that his usefulness was greatest and his example the brightest. I do not desire to use, in reference to one whom I truly venerated, the language of exaggeration; and I put myself upon my guard here, for the reason that there is a wonderfully sanctifying power in death. Our dead have a strange and a blessed transfiguration to our thought. They come back to us upon the wings of the morning and in the shadows of the evening, as the angels of God. We cease to think of them as flesh and blood; but strangely transformed to our gaze, they abide in the most secret chambers of the soul, a sacred and awful PRESENCE there. In that chamber of the heart where memory sleeps, there is a throne upon which these exalted and transfigured dead sit with a glory. Without the need of cold conventional words, we just let out the thought and hold communion with the PRESENCE enshrined within the pavilion of our love. I would not exaggerate what I have to say of this good elder, just for the reason that I wish to speak with an emphasis all the greater because within the limits of truth. I have known elders in the church all over this broad land who were as godly and as pious as Mr. MAYBIN I have known elders who were as valuable in counsel as he. I have known elders who, in the majesty of their personal influence, more particularly in the higher courts of the church, exceeded him. But I have never known anywhere upon the face of this earth one who could approach Mr. MAYBIN in the zeal, in the constancy, in the fidelity, in the patience, with which he did the work of an elder, in visiting the flock of God and being a shepherd in the household of faith. It will be a long, long day before the great loss which is experienced in this Church will be repaired. You will be served by men who are faithful and true; you *are* served by such men even now—men worthy of your

confidence, of your reverence, of your trust, and of your love: but it is no disparagement of them, or of their successors in office, to say that God does not often give to any Church such a crown as this good man, in discharging the episcopal work of an elder.

As to the characteristics of his piety, he was remarkable for the depth of his humility. No man built more upon his Lord; or stripped himself more bare before Him, as a sinner, depending alone upon grace for salvation. During two illnesses, in which it was my privilege to minister to him, the conspicuous feature of his experience was its pervading, constant, profound humility. Though all in this community rose up to honor him, he himself could not acknowledge even in thought the value of his labors. That humility was so pronounced as sometimes to fill me, his pastor, with pain; for he would come into my study asking for counsel, with such deference to a wisdom that was inferior to his own, that I was sometimes oppressed and ashamed. But it was in harmony with the reverence which caused him to bow with such docility to the authority of office; and to accept always the decisions of the courts of the church, even against his individual opinion.

But the feature of Mr. MAYBIN'S piety which I would signalize above all others, was his personal love for Christ. He believed firmly the doctrine of the Trinity; and it would not be difficult to find in the polemic history of this Church, in her early period, a conspicuous reason for this fact. But you, who were accustomed to his prayers in our informal services, will recall the adoration with which he would recognize the awful mystery of the Godhead—the mellow tones in which he would pour forth his adoring praise to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, rejoicing in the personality of each and in the blessed unity of all. Then, out of the bosom of that great truth, grasping as he did the grace and the preciousness of God's redeeming love, he poured out the whole wealth of his heart upon the person of Jesus Christ. In all private intercourse, in all public discussion, whether he spoke upon the street or spoke in the assembly, there always came out this burning, passionate attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ. Ah! faith always contemplates a person, and no doctrinal creed can make a Christian. Until you can see within the bosom of that creed God in Christ, our Elder Brother, taking hold upon our misery and ruin, there can be no Christian experience. But this man, through the whole twenty years in which I have been associated with him, manifested, as conspicuous above all other traits, a personal love for the Savior. He could say always, with the repenting Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest

that I love thee." He could say, with the same Peter in his doctrinal epistle, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

And then there was in Mr. MAYBIN a marvellous conscientiousness—a virtue which, towards the close of his long life, was perhaps developing into a weakness. So that I may say to these stricken children who mourn his death at eighty-one as though it was premature, never, never was I so completely satisfied as to the fact that the good Lord took our dear brother from them and from us just in the ripeness of the time. It was a conscientiousness that ranged over his whole life, and inspected minutely every act of it; until at last, rising into scrupulousness, he became somewhat unable to trace distinctions as they should be traced, and found a source of torture in what was one of the most beautiful excellencies of his character—that tenderness of conscience which, like the sensibility of the eye, finds its protection in the extreme delicacy of the organ itself.

And now, my brethren, this good elder, whose life for eight and forty years before this community and before this Church, has been a "work of faith, a labor of love and a patience of hope," has passed away—and we see how close the two worlds are. He slept over the line, and in a dream he passed into the presence of the immortals. Let it be our joy, this morning, that the communion of the saints is a communion which even death cannot break; that he whom this crape commemorates is not dead, but sleepeth; and in his true life, whilst we mourn, takes his seat among the elders that are round about the throne, and casts his crown before Him that sitteth upon it and before the Lamb.

At midnight came the cry,
"To meet thy God prepare!"
He woke and caught his Captain's eye—
Then strong in faith and prayer,

His spirit with a bound
Left its encumbering clay;
His tent, at sunrise, on the ground
A darkened ruin lay.

Soldier of Christ, well done
Praise by the new employ:
And while eternal ages run,
Rest in thy Savior's joy.

XLVIII.

SUPREME DEVOTION IN RELIGION.

PSALM cxix, 10:—"*With my whole heart have I sought thee: Oh, let me not wander from thy commandments.*'

This Psalm is one of the most remarkable in the whole collection, not only for its length, but for its structure. It is a sacred acrostic—divided into twenty-two sections, corresponding with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet—each of these being subdivided into eight verses, all commencing with the letter which is the signature of the section. It is an artificial arrangement, compelling the writer to a subsoiling process; and forcing him to penetrate, beneath mere surface thoughts, to those that lie hidden in the depths of his experience. The Psalm is also apophthegmatic, like the Proverbs of Solomon, without continuity of thought such as pervades David's other poems. Matthew Henry, therefore, appropriately compares it to a chest of gold rings, instead of a chain of cohering links. Yet it has one leading design, which is to magnify the word or law of God. Ten different terms are used interchangeably to express this one idea—way, truth, word, fear, law, testimonies, statutes, judgments, precepts, commandments. Each of these, whilst equal in significance and apparently identical, has a shade of meaning peculiar to itself: so that the same general thought is presented with almost kaleidoscopic variety. And so absorbed is the Psalmist in the contemplation of his theme, that only a single verse (122d) is found in which one of these terms does not occur. The most singular unity of subject is thus preserved amidst seemingly disjointed sentences. It is throughout a manual of pious meditations—the outbreathing of a devout soul after the service and worship of God.

The text embodies the spirit of the whole composition. It contains an *assertion* and a *prayer*.

THE ASSERTION: "*With my whole heart have I sought thee;*" which yields to us this doctrine—that A GENUINE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE IS MARKED BY SUPREME DEVOTION TO GOD'S SERVICE AND LAW.

But let us lift this out of the region of common-place, by attending to the two questions which immediately arise: *Why this entire consecration of soul should be necessary?* and, *What exactly it imports?* Distinct answers may be returned to both.

I. As to the first, it may be replied,

1. *That it is involved in the divine supremacy.* The moment we admit the idea of God into the mind, we have the conception of a being who is infinite in His perfections, and who stands to us in relations that are supreme. Under either view, His right to control is absolute. As our Creator, He has an undisputed proprietorship in us—being the Author of all our faculties, and entitled to all that these faculties can produce. In our dependence upon His watchful providence, we confess that in Him alone we "live and move and have our being." If He be infinite in His attributes, then reason itself teaches that we should defer to His wisdom and bow to His will. The divine supremacy is therefore *absolute*—not *relative*, as we sometimes employ the term in reference to man. It extends not only over the person of the subject, and over his external fortunes; but over the affections and the will, the reason, the conscience and the heart. His empire is within the soul, a jurisdiction wielded over the whole domain of thought and desire.

It is just this truth to which Christian experience responds. It is not enough to accept it with an intellectual assent, and to place it as a dogma in one's creed. Its power must be felt as a living principle, working up from the foundation of Christian character through all the actions of the life. The believer erects a throne in his own heart upon which Jehovah sits in all the majesty of a sovereign. To His rightful supremacy the Christian bows with the full consent of his judgment, of his conscience, of his will. He labors to this end, that "every thought may be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." [II Cor. x, 5.] He is not satisfied until the great God shall have the same place in his affections as in creation and providence, "God over all, and blessed forever."

2. *It is involved in the priesthood of believers.* See how this priesthood is recognized in Scripture: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." [Romans xii, 1.] So again in I Peter ii, 5, 9: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ:" "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should

show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

True, all this is to be understood of the Church in a figured sense; since there is but "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," who "was once offered to bear the sins of many." [I Timothy ii, 5, and Hebrews ix, 28.] Yet it has a great fact underlying it; that the worship of God on earth and in heaven, now and forever, is founded upon a sacrifice and is conducted through a Priest. That sacrifice is the sacrifice once offered "in the end of the world to put away sin," and through the virtue of this atonement alone we have peace with God In no sense can it be true, therefore, that the Christian is a priest to render satisfaction for sin, or to procure reconciliation with God. But so often as he pleads the merit of this one sacrifice as the ground of his acceptance, just so often does he discharge what God is pleased to regard as a priestly function—being made priests unto God through our living union with Him who is the only true Priest in His temple. Then the prayers and praise, the obedience and the worship, which spring spontaneously out of the depths of our own love—these are the "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." They rest upon the efficacy of His atoning blood, and issue from the gratitude which this salvation inspires. They are gathered into the censer of the great High Priest, and are presented by Him, on our behalf, before the throne. Through all eternity, the worship of the redeemed will be mediated through Christ their Head, and no stain of imperfection will rest upon the service which is perfumed with the incense of His merit.

But if in this sense believers are priests unto God, the law of the priesthood must obtain in their separation and consecration to this work. "For every High Priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:" "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." [Hebrews v, 1, 4.] Even "Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest; but he that said unto him, thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." [Ibid. v, 5] The law is thus laid down, that priesthood is not assumed, but is conferred: and in the lower application to the figured priesthood of the Christian, to say the least, it establishes the fact of his segregation from the world and his anointing to the divine service. But this leads

3. To the fact, *that entire consecration is implied in the whole method of grace.* It would expand this discourse into a volume to develope this topic in the particulars it embraces. A few sentences will, however,

suffice to mark out the line of thought. There is, for example, sovereign election by the Father in which the manifestation of His grace begins: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." [Ephesians i, 4, 5] Then follows the gift of those thus chosen to Christ, to be His seed: "as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" [John xvii, 2]; "I pray for them—I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given, me"—"thine they were, and thou gavest them me." [Ibid. xvii, 5, 9.] Connect with this the Savior's additional right acquired by actual purchase: "forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." [I Peter i, 18, 19.] What is so precious as the blood? It is the life. and life for life is the ransom which Jesus paid, when upon the altar of sacrifice He redeemed us with His own blood. The title, therefore, which vests in Him, is warranted by the fact of the purchase and by the immense cost at which it was secured. In addition to all this, consider your renewal by the Holy Ghost: "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" [Ephesians ii, 1]; and that living union with Christ, which is accomplished through faith, whereby "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" [Ephesians v, 30]—a union so awful in its mystery, and yet so true in its reality, that its perfect analogy can only be found in the communion of the adorable Godhead; "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." [John xvii, 23.] Ah! is not this one of those innermost words which could only have fallen from the lips of the great Revealer? Even the believer, in the joy with which he repeats them, trembles with awe at the solemnity of their import. Finally, this series of connected truths may be concluded by reference to the Spirit's indwelling; through which the Christian is consecrated, even in his flesh, as the temple of the Most High: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" [I Cor. vi, 19.] What dignity it would lend to our carriage before the world, could we adequately feel that the Holy Ghost dwells within us—sanctifying every member of the body, as well as every faculty of the soul, and making it an instrument of holiness before the Lord!

Ascend then by these successive steps, and see upon what an elevated table land the Christian stands. Chosen by the Father, in the eternal counsels of His own love—given to the Son in the covenant of redemption, before the world was—purchased by Him when He "made his soul an offering for sin"—renewed and sanctified by the power of the Holy Ghost—mystically united with Jesus Christ, and made "partakers of the divine nature" in Him—and consecrated as temples of the living God, so that all sin becomes sacrilege in His sight: what can all this import, if it does not involve separation from the world and supreme devotion to the service of God?

4. *Nothing short of this will satisfy the soul, and render Christian duty a delight.* Our nature finds rest, only as all its powers are taken up in the employments of life. If there be one inactive, by the instinct which drives it into exercise it becomes an element of discord—like the gastric juices of the body, which must expend their action either in the digestion of necessary food, or else in corroding the walls of the flesh in which they are confined. In all the diversity of human pursuits, a certain subordination must obtain by which they are relegated to a common end. There must be an underlying unity of purpose and a due concentration of the powers, in order to achieve the success which we desire, or to find enjoyment in the prosecution of our work.

By this law, religion must be everything to us, or it is nothing. The soul can experience repose only when it rests upon God. He is the all-sufficient, from whose fulness alone the daily supply of strength and comfort can be derived to the dependent creature. It is God's method to make Christian duty easy, by making it a delight. The drudgery of work ceases as soon as perfect satisfaction is found in the work itself, and every faculty finds employment in what grace has rendered most congenial. The more entire, therefore, the consecration, the more solid is the joy which is felt. The spiritual appetite is fed by that which draws upon its strength, and the replenishment keeps even pace with the waste. There can be no exhaustion of the energies, but a constant invigoration: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength—they shall mount up with wings as eagles—they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not be faint." [Isaiah xl, 31.]

We are summoned now to enquire

II. WHAT THIS CONSECRATION OF SOUL EXACTLY MEANS? It is the more necessary to raise this question, in order to guard the truth from the extravagances of fanaticism. The religious element in our nature prompts almost every man to the construction of a creed, and to the

practice of devotion, of some sort. But unfortunately this too often operates as a merely natural sentiment; and the result is a complete perversion of true religion as the Scriptures reveal it. On the one side, it projects a purely mechanical worship, running at length into all the gymnastics of ritualism. Stone blind to the fundamental conception of God, "who is a Spirit and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth," it puts one through a course of "bodily exercise which profiteth nothing." When the postures and the crossings, the genuflexions and incantations, are all brought to an end, the religious acrobat in all the dust and sweat of his toil hears only the rejection of his pompous ritualism in the words, "Who hath required this at your hands to tread my courts? * * * Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth—they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them." [Isa. i, 12, 14.]

On the other hand, a recoil from the insufficiency of solemn lip-service plunges others in the depths of mysticism, and into the practice of fanatical austerities. The common duties of life are thrown aside as an encumbrance; and men slink into solitude, seeking to subdue sin by the repression of all their energies, and mistaking the doze of quietism for the honest rest of the soul upon a Savior's love. The case is still more aggravated when the harshness of asceticism is introduced as a make-weight to this defective piety. Penances and fastings, pilgrimages and vigils, are piled upon each other, in the same spirit with which an Indian Fakir throws himself upon a bed of spikes, a gloomy travesty of the one perfect sacrifice which hath forever taken away sin. Ah! what a perversion of the genius of Christianity, which throws a cheerful radiance over life, and bids us to rejoice in the Lord always! The Gospel builds no cloisters, in which men shall hide from the activities of life. It bids every man abide in the lot which providence assigns, to take up the great trusts which it imposes, and to meet the responsibilities which become light as they are cheerfully borne. Thus does life become a discipline; in which every care, every sorrow, every labor and every sacrifice become the instruments of grace. Whilst insisting, then, upon the necessity of entire consecration to the service of God, it is incumbent upon us to guard against these extravagances which but deform the truth. In this view, what does supreme devotion to God actually import?

1. *That in all lower interests God is placed in the centre, and is honored in them all.* This guiding principle harmonizes all our relations, and brings the duties of each into perfect adjustment. God makes nothing stiffly uniform, whilst a marvellous unity prevails in the widest complexity. There is, for example, the double movement of the earth

around its own axle, and in its circuit around the sun. Shall the very planets be capable of a two fold rotation, and man not be able to diffuse himself over all the circles in which he is placed? But then these must be concentric, and all his duties must radiate from a source which is common to them. We are men, husbands, fathers, brothers, citizens, subjects, neighbors, friends. Each one of these terms defines a separate relation, all whose duties are obligatory at once. How shall they be harmonized, except by subordination? And the common tie, which binds them together, is the tie which connects them all with the Creator.

The difficulty is to realize in practice what is so plain in theory; and for this we are dependent upon the sovereignty of grace. The solution is found in Christian experience. The great first law is obeyed, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all the heart and soul and mind and strength:" which draws after it, by necessary sequence, the second law, of "loving our neighbor as ourself." The two are conjoined by the logic of grace, no less than by the logic of reason, and practice is blended with theory. Life is marvellously sweetened when its various duties are adjusted, and we move without friction or jar through relations which seem tangled and complex. A sanctifying virtue rests likewise upon every act, when it is thus transformed into worship. "Whether we eat or drink, we do all to the glory of God," who accepts us as truly in our sleep and in our dreams as in our waking and conscious activity. The whole life of petty detail is thus converted into a chant of praise, and goes up as a whole burnt-offering acceptable to God. The Christian who recognizes and honors God, his Redeemer and portion, in all the relations and duties of earth, is able with David to say, "With my whole heart have I sought thee."

2. *This declaration is fulfilled when all the actions are formally of the nature of obedience.* It is precisely here the line is drawn between *morality* and *religion:* two things most sadly confounded, yet each lying so distinctly upon either side of this dividing line. How often we hear it said, "I do this because I see it to be *right;* and I refrain from that because it is equally clear that it is *wrong.*" All which is very admirable morality, but it is not religion. The man's own conceptions are made the foundation of duty, and his reason and will are the standard by which it is measured. This is not to be lifted out of the human sphere at all, and there is no religion but in the sphere which touches God.

It is here grace comes with its higher teaching—that God's nature is the foundation of all rectitude; and His will expressed through His law,

the sole standard by which it is to be judged. The morality which springs from a purely human view of fitness and propriety, may be of the most exalted type, and may challenge the sincerest admiration. But if it foist itself in the place which should be occupied with the fear of God, the delusion is as fatal as it is subtle. The will must bow to the authority of God, in the specific form of obedience to His commands. We have already seen how, to the Christian eye, Jehovah is the centre from which is described every earthly circle. When the sweet consciousness prevails that every obligation is discharged as an act of homage to the divine authority, as well as in the strength which divine grace imparts, we have the sense of consecration which pours the anointing oil over the imperfections of our service. In the midst of shortcomings bitterly bewailed, we can still truthfully say, "With my whole heart have I sought thee."

3. *It is further implied, that all the powers of the soul are gathered up into this obedience.* Have you ever considered the deep philosophy of one of David's prayers, "UNITE my heart to fear thy name?" [Ps. lxxxvi, 11.] Alas! the deplorable schism in the human soul which is here confessed! Have you never felt and bewailed it?—when the current of appetite is sweeping you on with fearful violence, while reason points to the precipice over which it will presently leap, a maddened cataract? when a stubborn will cleaves to a darling sin, while conscience whispers of the death which will be its wages? What is this but "the law in the members warring against the law of the mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members? [Romans vii, 23.] It is this insurrection turning all within into wild anarchy, which renders Christian obedience so difficult, and robs the service of God of so much of its joy.

There is but one resource—to quell the mutiny at once. The dismembered faculties must be reduced to their proper allegiance; the schism must be composed, and man become again a unit to serve God with an undivided heart. The conflict may be renewed a thousand times; but just as often the victory must declare for truth and duty. When this is accomplished—when the believer is again able to say with David, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed," then will he "sing and give praise." [Psalm lvii, 7.] With all his faculties concentrated upon the obedience and worship which God commands, however defective both may be in their range, he will still be bold in saying, "With my whole heart have I sought thee."

This must suffice in exposition of THE ASSERTION; let us now turn

to the PRAYER of the text, "O, LET ME NOT WANDER FROM THY COMMANDMENTS!"

1. *It expresses the Christian's self-distrust, in view of his proneness to wander from duty.* You have read of ships swerving from their course whilst punctually following the compass, and stranded upon hidden reefs in some unsuspected latitude. The cause is found in the deviation of the needle, under the covert influence of iron bolts from which it was insufficiently protected. One of the problems in navigation is to secure the perfect insulation of the needle—which will enable it, in obedience to its own law, to point unerringly to the north. What a symbol of the treachery with which "a deceived heart" so often turns the Christian aside! Who can completely extricate himself from the evils of his surroundings! In the midst of these he must abide, and fight the battle of faith against armed temptations that hold him in continual siege. The traitors within are more to be dreaded than the foes without. If the watch be suspended for an instant, lo! the portals are thrown open, and the Greeks are within the walls of Troy. Oh! the weariness of this unceasing watchfulness, and the pain of this suspicion of ourselves! Well may it wring from the Christian the bitter cry, "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Under the constant pressure of fear and self-distrust, the prayer goes up with the panting breath, "O, let me not wander from thy commandments!"

You will be ready to pronounce this want of self reliance an element of weakness. What steadiness of purpose, or of character, can be expected to mark the career, in face of this habitual distrust of one's own loyalty and constancy? Behold, then, one of the paradoxes of the Christian life: "When I am weak, then am I strong." Our strength, like our life, is treasured in our Head: "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Alongside of this negative self-distrust, the spring of vacillation and weakness, lies the positive reliance upon divine grace which corrects it. By the energy of a supernatural strength, the weakness of the believer is built up into solid power. It conquers every foe, by the omnipotence which resides in it from the source whence it has been drawn. Distrust is converted into boldness, and fear into courage, by the magnetic touch of our Master's hand.

2. *The prayer expresses the agency of God in our continued preservation.* This is done in a variety of ways. He may, for example, *in His providence shield us from the occasions of sin.* The force of outward temptation depends upon its concurrence with the inward desire which leans toward it: just as in contagious disease, the presence of the

external poison must coincide with a predisposition in the body to receive it. If one or the other of these conditions be wanting, we are in perfect safety from the invasion. What an immense range is given to Providence here, in the protection of the saint! He, who orders our lot, may so shape our circumstances that we shall not be pressed with solicitations to sin; or, the temptation may occur at times when the soul is built up in strength sufficient to resist. It is necessary that character should be tested; and there is no fidelity worth the name, which is not subjected to trial. But the superabounding grace of our heavenly Father sustains and shields in our temptations, as in our sorrows: "In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it—he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind." [Isaiah xxvii, 8.]

Even when He does not spare us the conflict, *He secures to us the victory and the triumph.* The battle may be long and fierce. We may be assailed with all "the fiery darts" of the adversary. The world, the flesh and the devil may join in triple alliance against us; and in weariness and discouragement we may exclaim that "our enemies are lively, and they are strong:" but somehow, in the very faintness of exhaustion, faith holds its own; and we are brought off "more than conquerors through him that loved us." Thus "does the Lord, by his favor, make our mountain to stand strong." "One shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight."

But most of all does our Redeemer *so let down into the soul the sweetness of His love, as to quench the very appetite for sin.* This is the believer's grand security. The Savior's graces are revealed to us, and we "see a beauty in him that we should desire him." He becomes to us "the chiefest among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely." The soul goes out to him in the passion of its desire, and "earth grows dull in our esteem." We have tasted of "angels' food," and cannot "lick the serpent's dust." The follies of this poor world, so seductive to the carnal taste, turn to ashes in our mouth. Nothing is so sweet to us as intercourse with Him, whose courts are "paved with love." The power of indwelling sin decays—its very root is withered—"the flesh, with its affections and lusts, is crucified"—the body of sin languishes, overborne by the vigor of the spiritual life which diffuses itself more and more through our whole being. As the body, in the invigoration of health, throws off disease—so the "soul prospereth" and repels the sin which can find no inlet through any loop-hole. How easily then can grace, through its sanctifying virtue, fulfil the prayer always on the believer's tongue, "O, let me not wander from thy commandments!"

On the next Sabbath, with our Master's leave, we shall gather around His table to renew the allegiance we have so often professed, and to hold the communion we have so often enjoyed. There will be some too, joining with us in those solemn acts for the first time, with trembling humility declaring themselves to be the Lord's forever. How important that we should be in solid earnest before God! We cannot escape the sense of imperfection, as judged by the standard of law. Our only solace is in dealing with God upon the principle of grace. We must come to this supper, saying that "we have sinned and come short of the glory of God:" but we may approach, with an equal persuasion of an honest purpose to serve Him. We can truthfully declare, with David, "With my whole heart have I sought thee." It is an immense relief to have "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." It gives boldness to take the covering off our hearts, in the fearfully solemn appeal to the divine omniscience, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." [Psalm cxxxix, 23, 24.]

My brethren, the peculiar temptation, in our age, is to a superficial and formal piety. We thank God, with reason, that the days of persecution are passed: and we rejoice in the triumph of Christianity, as we see its influence moulding the institutions of our land, and leavening social intercourse. But there is a danger in this very repose. The enervation of Capua was more fatal to Hannibal than all the arms of Rome. The world would draw the Church into compromise; and is as anxious to obliterate the distinction between the two, as once to deepen it. Christian power depends upon the earnestness of Christian convictions, and upon the firmness of its testimony for the truth. May God give us grace to avoid the gloom of asceticism, on the one hand, and to preserve the vigor, on the other hand, of a true consecration to Him who has bought us with his blood!

XLIX.

GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST.

II CORINTHIANS iv, 6:—"*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*"

In the thirty-fourth chapter of the book of Exodus, we have the account of the shining of Moses' face after the forty days' communion with God upon the mount. The historian tells us that, when he came down from that protracted and holy interview, his face shone with such a radiance that the children of Israel could not look upon it; so that in speaking to them he was obliged to cover it with a veil, which was only removed when he went into the Sanctuary to speak with God. In the text, especially when read in connection with the preceding chapter, there is evident reference to this remarkable incident in the life of the ancient prophet and lawgiver. That radiance was intended symbolically to represent the transfiguration of the believer into the image of God, by spiritual communion with Him. But more immediately, as a sign, it authenticated Moses as God's messenger to Israel: and especially it constituted him the type of the "one Mediator" between God and man, who should appear in "the fulness of time." This is abundantly clear from the testimony which declares that the veil remains upon the face of Moses, in the reading of the Old Testament, and is only "done away in Christ." [II Cor. iii, 14, 15.] If, then, this splendor illuminated the countenance of the typical mediator, how much greater must be the glory in the face of Jesus Christ in whom is fulfilled all that the former but dimly represents. In this very particular the Apostle elaborates the comparison and the contrast between the two dispensations. The brightness upon Moses' face was a veiled brightness: that in the face of Jesus Christ is undimmed and conspicuous. The radiance of Moses was only for a little while, and soon went into eclipse: that of Jesus Christ continues forever, shining with still greater brilliancy in heaven above. The "veil being done away in Christ," the Apostle goes on to

say that "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." [II Cor. iii, 18.] The glass or mirror, into which we are represented as looking with unimpeded vision, is the Gospel. The image which this presents to our view, is the Lord Jesus Christ; upon whose face shines the whole glory of God. And as the believer gazes upon this reflected glory, through the Spirit's power and under the law of assimilation to that which we habitually contemplate, he himself is transformed into an image of brightness.

Can there be a more suitable theme for our sacramental meditations this morning? The special design of this ordinance is to commemorate Christ—to hold Him up before our thought, so that we shall have fellowship with Him in His death and resurrection. What a bliss will enter into our communion with Him this day, if we can only behold Him as "the brightness of the Father's glory," bathing our spirits in the splendor of His beams!

I. WE SEE, THEN, THE DIVINE GLORY IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST, AS HE IS THE PERSONAL MANIFESTATION OF GOD TO HIS CREATURES. The visible universe presents the traces of the Deity in its whole constitution and order, from which we necessarily infer His existence and attributes. On every side we behold the proofs of wisdom, goodness and power. The mountain, which lifts its rugged grandeur above the clouds—the deep ravine, which opens its gloomy depths at the base—the blue sky, which spreads its majestic dome above the earth, where sense and imagination are equally lost in the effort to explore—the ocean, in its almost boundless stretch, whose waves sometimes dally playfully with the shore, and sometimes dash madly against the stars: lo! "these are but parts of his ways," which bear the impress of His majesty and power. But they do not present God to us *immediately*, nor in the *substance* of His being. We can only "mount from nature up to nature's God" by the ladder of our logic. We trace the marks of contrivance and skill wherever we turn; and are compelled by a fundamental law of the reason to postulate a great designer from whose counsel and will the complex mechanism has proceeded. But it is only through an inference we can bridge the chasm between the works and the being of God, however immediate and necessary this inference may be from the very constitution of the reason itself. It is reserved for the incarnation of Jesus Christ to make the revelation of God in the distinctness of His personal subsistence.

Look at some of the testimonies upon this point: "In the beginning

was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." [John i, 1] In the beginning, a phrase which here, as in the first verse of Genesis, denotes absolute eternity. The mind is carried back, along the notations of time, until the point is reached where the reckoning begins: and there it pauses upon the lip of the vast eternity "unmeasured by the flight of years," which lies beyond. In that "beginning" the Word was with God, and was God. But what next? "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we behold his glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." [John i, 14.] In the incarnate Word, then, we behold the glory of the Godhead.

So Paul, in Hebrews i, 1-3: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past to the Fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high." This incarnate Son and Heir is the radiance of the divine brightness. Just as the rays from a luminous body are of the same nature with the body from which they shoot, so is this Son the raying forth of the divine effulgence, revealing to us the brightness of the Father's spiritual essence. He is, too, "the express image of his person." As the seal impresses its permanent form upon the melted wax, so it has pleased the Father in the eternal begetting of the Son to impress upon His person the very image of the Godhead. We do not pretend to probe the mystery; and language fails, with all its analogies, to portray it. But how august the manifestation, when God reveals His personal being and nature in Him who is "Immanuel, God with us!"

> "Thee," next they sang, "of all creation first,
> Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,
> In whose conspicuous countenance, without cloud
> Made visible, the Almighty Father shines,
> Whom else no creature can behold; on thee
> Impress'd the effulgence of his glory abides,
> Transfused on thee his ample Spirit rests."

One of the great features of Christianity, by which it is distinguished from every form of religion purely human, is this doctrine of the *incarnation*—especially as set over against that of *apotheosis*. The gods of Indian, of Grecian, and of Roman mythology are created by the latter. The attributes of wisdom, power, goodness, truth, and the like, are per-

sonified into the different divinities which fill the ancient Pantheon. You have Minerva representing the quality of wisdom, Mars that of power, Jupiter that of supremacy or rule. And so through the entire range of human qualities and affections, and through all the diversified processes by which nature works, until by the number of the creations and transfigurations the whole system breaks down under the weight of its unutterable absurdity. Christianity, on the other hand—or rather I should say the religion of the Bible, whether found in the books of Moses or in the epistles of Paul—reveals a God who is a Spirit, the maker of heaven and earth, and who dwelt among men by a veritable incarnation. John, standing at the end of Revelation and looking through the telescope of prophecy, declares that he "heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." [Rev. xxi, 3]

I cannot here enlarge upon this distinction between the religion of the Bible and those which have been devised by human wisdom, except to say—that the gods of the heathen are no true gods, being the mere bloating of the created and finite into terrible and fantastic proportions, invested with all the infirmities, passions and vices of that nature which is travestied in the very effort of transfiguration. In like manner, as these false systems have no proper gods, so have they no real incarnation of the same. The incarnations, with which the old mythology is so full, are only the putting on the semblance of men, for temporary disguise—not the actual assumption of human nature in both its constituent parts of body and soul, and with the full complement of its necessary properties and qualities. The difference is fundamental. False religions ascend from the earth upward, and yield a God only by the apotheosis of the human: the true religion reveals a God who comes down from above, in a substantive incarnation such as that of the Lord Jesus Christ, "God manifest in the flesh."*

In this connection observe, further, how sharply the Scriptures draw

* In Liddon's first Bampton Lecture we find the following discriminating sentences: "Christianity, from the first, has proclaimed herself, not the authoress of an apotheosis, but the child and the product of an incarnation. She could not have been both. Speaking historically, an apotheosis belongs strictly to the Greek world; while a mimicry of the incarnation is characteristically oriental. Speaking philosophically, the God of an apotheosis is a creation of human thought, or of human fancy: the God of an incarnation is presupposed as an objectively existing Being, who manifests Himself by it in

the line between the two natures in the person of our Lord. They are kept entirely distinct. The one does not absorb the other, nor are the two blended together so as to form a composite. It is the divine person of the Son, who assumes a complete human nature through which the divine glory is continually manifested. We are, therefore, never brought down to a *material* conception of God. The spirituality of His essence is never sunk into the flesh in which it is veiled. Enshrined in the humanity, it breaks forth in manifestations which teach us that "God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." Nothing in the revelations of Scripture is more marvellous than that God should disclose Himself in human form, through human sympathies and instincts, with human intelligence and heart, without shading in the least degree the spirituality of His nature, or the glory of His being. It is no human God presented to us, as in the false human religions; but the living Jehovah who, in the person of the only begotten Son, is in "Christ who is over all, God blessed forever." [Romans ix, 5.] "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell:" and again, "in him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily." [Col. i, 19, and ii, 9.] "Bodily"—an exact rendering of the original; which emphasizes the statement, that in the very body in which the Son became incarnate the divine fulness dwelt. Is it strange, then, that upon the Mount of Transfiguration, just before His death, the body of Christ should be lit up by the glory concealed within? A prophetic pledge of His glorified humanity, as it should appear after the resurrection, was afforded in this splendid illumination of His flesh by the indwelling Deity.

In thus holding forth God, not as abstract power, not as the Pantheistic blending of spirit and matter, but as a personal subsistence, endued with a personal will, and standing in personal relations to the creature, does the Lord Jesus bear upon His face the glory of God. Under this aspect alone, the strength and beauty of the Apostle's description are completely realized.

the sphere of sense. Speaking religiously, belief in an apotheosis must be fatal to the primary movements of piety towards its object, whenever men are capable of earnest and honest reflection: while it is incontestible, that the doctrine of an incarnation stimulates piety in a degree precisely proportioned to the sincerity of the faith which welcomes it. Thus the ideas of an apotheosis and an incarnation stand towards each other in historical, philosophical and religious contrast. Need I add that religiously, philosophically and historically, Christianity is linked to the one, and is simply incompatible with the other?"

II. THIS GLORY IS SEEN IN THE REVELATION WHICH CHRIST MAKES OF GOD, IN THE RELATION OF A FATHER. God, in the beginning, constituted man His son. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," was the language of the divine council. [Genesis i, 26] Thus was he endowed with the high prerogative of reason, with "knowledge, righteousness and holiness." His original relation to God, therefore, was not exclusively that of a creature, but of a child. Hence Jehovah is styled with such emphasis "the God of the spirits of all flesh" [Numbers xvi, 22]; and with still greater definiteness "the Father of spirits" [Hebrews xii, 9.] Had man never fallen from the image of God in which he was created, the filial sentiment would always have carried him into God's presence as into the presence of a father. But in the sad hour of his transgression, when the dark curtain was dropped over the throne, the fatherhood of God was obscured to the sinner in the avenging justice of the Lawgiver and the Judge. The breach could only be healed by grace. He who is the very Son of that Father —who in the distinction of His own personality is known as "the only begotten"—and who is therefore the sole proprietor of the title and the relationship—He, the immediate, original and only Son, must stand upon the earth, in the guilty sinner's stead, to buy back the forfeited relation, and once more reveal God as our Father through adopting love.

Have you failed to notice how that Father-name was ever upon the lips of Jesus? When His earthly parents found Him disputing with the doctors in the temple, after three days' anxious search, His response to their rebuke was, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" [Luke ii, 49.] When He stood later in the waters of the Jordan, there came "a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [Matthew iii, 17.] Amidst the shades of Gethsemane He prays, "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" [Matthew xxvi, 39.] In the hour of still deeper anguish, when beneath the cloud were hid all visible tokens of the divine approval, right out from His broken heart came the cry, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" [Luke xxiii, 34.] Last of all, in the pathetic surrender of His life, He exclaims, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." [Ibid., 46.] In that high-priestly prayer, which preceded all this sorrow, how lovingly and piously the words fall from His lips, "Holy Father," "Righteous Father!" [John xvii.]

In the Old Testament, whether you read the prayers of David or of Solomon, of Hezekiah or of Samuel, the address is solemn and impress-

ive to "the Lord of hosts," "the Lord of heaven and earth," to "the Lord who fills the temple with his glory." But when you come to "the High Priest of our profession," He knows God only by that title which shows the eternal relation of "the only begotten" to the Father. The contrast is not less conspicuous as to the covenant style in which Jehovah is addressed. In the Old Testament it is "the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob." In the New Testament it is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." [Ephesians i, 3.] It passes all comprehension, how the Savior brings out this paternity of God to the believer—displaying not so much His creative power, as His fatherly tenderness and love. With confidential sweetness He whispers the secret of our adoption; "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." [II Cor. vi, 18.]

If, by virtue of His divine nature, Christ is eminently the Son of God, so by virtue of His real humanity is He the Son of man. He unites in Himself the infiniteness of God with the weakness, dependence and suffering of the creature. As the Son of God, He commands the winds of heaven, stills the waves of the sea, and breaks the sleep of the grave: yet, in His weariness as the Son of man, He rests at the well of Samaria, and sinks beneath His anguish, in the darkness of the garden. As "Jehovah's fellow," He lays His right hand upon the throne of universal dominion; as the Son of Mary, He touches the sinner in all his guilt and misery. By His divine Spirit, He lifts us through faith into living union with Himself; and "power is given us to become sons of God." [John i, 12.] We are recognized as such by Him to whom we are taught to pray "Our Father, which art in heaven," and pour into His ear our sorrows and our joys. In disclosing the Deity to us in the sweetness of that primitive and paternal relation, He conspicuously reflects the divine glory.

III. THIS IS REVEALED TO US AGAIN, SINCE IN THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST WE TRACE THE GLORY OF THE LAWGIVER AND THE LAW. The highest view we can take of the divine law is, that it is a revelation of the divine *character*. If it be an exposition of the divine claims, these are determined by God's nature and the relations in which He stands to the intelligent creature. The law was the original medium of communication between the two. Through it God was revealed in the essential holiness of His nature and in the absolute supremacy of His will. Through it the creature rendered the homage of his worship and of his obedience, and acquired the character which should fit him for the blessedness of an ineffable communion hereafter. It is this which

renders the law so inexorable in its demands, so incapable of relaxation or repeal. All the attributes of God are stamped upon the precepts and upon the penalty alike; and they leap forth to pursue the transgressor in his guilt. If God change not, there is no escape for the sinner from this necessary and terrible vindication—I will not say of the divine claims merely, but of the divine perfections; until there shall rise up an obedience, on the sinner's behalf, which is perfectly commensurate. This alone is the problem of grace; and this alone is the solution which grace provides.

It is the old, old story of the Redeemer's sacrificial work. No created being could be found in heaven or on earth who did not owe obedience for himself, and who was not thus shut out from becoming the substitute for the guilty. No created being could render an obedience which was exhaustive, and thus "magnify the law and make it honorable." Therefore "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." [Galatians iv, 4, 5.] Only He could say "IT IS FINISHED"—a word that sounded to the depths of the law, with an obedience which took up all that it contained. By the side of this law with its eternal righteousness, hangs in heaven this perfect obedience of God's incarnate Son: and as the angels gaze upon "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne," they behold the reflection of that glory which resides in the bosom of God's perfect and blessed law.

IV. THE GLORY OF GOD, WHICH THE BELIEVER SEES IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST, IS THE GLORY OF HIS LOVE. There is no sweeter description of God to us than in the three monosyllables, "GOD IS LOVE." And yet until the Son came from the bosom of the Father to redeem a lost world, where was the adequate expression of it? We do not know how many ages made up the history of the universe before this earth was fashioned, and "the morning stars sang together" the hymn of its birth. We know little of the hierarchy of heaven; nor how many links of exalted being intervene between man and the archangel. But it was only a creature's measure of God's infinite love, found in the creature's experience of the blessings which could be embraced within a nature that was finite. Beyond all this stretched the vast sea of infinite love, incapable of being bounded within the limits of a creature's thought. Who shall expound this, but One who comes out of the pavilion of Jehovah Himself? Only He that lay in the Father's bosom, and "was daily his delight," could reveal it. No language had words to utter it, not even the dialect of the immortals. No speech of men or angels

could interpret its boundless wealth. It must be unfolded by deeds, not words. A work, such as the Son of God alone could achieve, must express its depth and heighth, its length and breadth—a work of suffering and of blood—in which life itself was given, and the soul was made an offering. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." [John iii, 16.] This is the divine measure of divine love: the whole law of God, in the stretch of its precepts and in the power of its curse, measured by an "obedience unto death"—the whole divine pity, sweeping in its condescension from the throne in heaven to the cross on Calvary—the whole human soul of the sinless sufferer pouring itself out as water. Oh! my hearers, what can there be more than this? What can there be more, than that the Father's love to the Son should be His love to the sinner? and that Jesus should pray "THAT THE LOVE WHEREWITH THOU HAST LOVED ME MAY BE IN THEM, AND I IN THEM." [John xvii, 26.]

Have I not said enough to illustrate the language of the text? It is the creative work of grace: "for God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," at the first, "hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is by the illumination of His Spirit bringing the light of the Savior's face to beam upon us, that we have the knowledge of this glory. And blessed be His holy name, the experience of this, which begins on earth, will be more richly developed in heaven. "The Lamb, as it had been slain," will be seen by us there. It is not given to any creature to look upon God and live. But in the glorified humanity of the Redeemer will be found a representative display of the divine glory, which shall eternally ravish the eye. The whole splendor of the Godhead will shine through it as through a cloud, tempering the brightness which must else consume—the true Shekinah in the temple above, in which Jehovah is forever revealed. Oh! that glory of God, how it gathers all up in the white light of that eternal day! There is the infinitude of God's wisdom, of His power, of His justice, of His truth, of His goodness, of His holiness, and of His love—but all combine in the glory which is seen in the face of Jesus Christ; in the eternal splendor of Him who is the gem and the crown, the blessedness and the joy of that home of the redeemed forever and forever.

This precious Savior comes to us to-day as a *sufferer*. He comes to us in the hour of His own passion, "the man of sorrows and acquainted

with grief." Are we not able to hold fellowship with Him in it all? Ah! my brethren, we live as yet in a world which is shattered by sin; and we have a deeper acquaintance with sorrow than with joy. I do not say that our dark hours are more numerous than the bright, but that grief leaves a deeper trace upon the soul. Wherever its sharp blade touches, it leaves a scar which never wears out. Our joys are more superficial, and the memories of them are transient. But your experience of life is scarcely complete, if there be not some fossil grief imbedded in the soul, which tells the history of suffering known only to you and to God. And what a mysterious power of resurrection there is in sorrow, which you thought laid away in the grave of forgetfulness! How the spectral forms rise up in the night season, when everything sleeps but memory? Ye children of sadness, it is just because of this connection with sorrow that your Savior comes to you in His own bleeding, when the agony is upon Him of a world's guilt—and gives you His broken body for your food, and His priceless blood for your drink. It is a sacrificial repast which is most grateful to a sufferer: and with unutterable pathos the Savior says, in His own tears and in yours, "Remember me!"

"Remember Thee, and all thy pains,
And all thy love to me!
Yea, while a breath, a pulse remains,
Will I remember Thee.

"And when these failing lips grow dumb,
And mind and memory flee:
When Thou shalt in thy kingdom come,
Jesus, remember me."

Yes, this solace remains to us. By and by, He will take the veil of suffering off His face, and we shall behold Him "the Lord of glory." For we, too, shall be transfigured, and shall rise into our Father's presence with no stain of earth upon us. It will be our joy to look upon Him who has always revealed to us the Father: and beholding that Father's brightness in the face of our Beloved, we "shall be changed into his image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of our Lord."

L.

SUBMISSION.

JOB i, 21:—"*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*"

Within the past three months—to go no farther back and gather a larger list—the shadow of death has thrown its chill upon no less than twelve of the homes in this church, in each of which the bereavement was of the heaviest. Bruised hearts gather every Sabbath within this sanctuary, which need the lesson of submission taught in the text with an emphasis as great as human speech can utter. It is really buoyant with triumph, and sounds like a New Testament word: as though Job had heard from the lips of Paul [Romans v, 3 5] "We glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience—and patience, experience—and experience, hope—and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us:" or from the mouth of James [i, 2, 3], "My brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience:" or from Peter [I Epistle iv, 12, 13], "Brethren, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

It is certainly noteworthy that from the lips of this typical sufferer, in the twilight of that early patriarchal age in which Job is supposed to have lived, should burst this language of entire submission in sorrow. I have styled him a *typical* sufferer; for when did any ever live, save the Redeemer Himself, who was more truly a representative of the sorrows which fall upon our race? Look at the disasters which came upon him, in such quick succession. First of all, he was stripped of earthly fortune—his servants, his oxen, his asses, his camels, and his sheep—so that he, who "was the greatest of all the men of the east," sat like a

beggar upon the dung-hill. Then, his seven sons and three daughters, a princely household, were overtaken by sudden and violent death, leaving him childless in his age. And finally, he is touched by the hand of disease, and foul ulcers cover his body—so that he sits in the ashes, and bitterly bewails the day of his birth. Not more truly was Solomon raised up as the representative of kingly grandeur, that he might pour upon the ear of the world his mournful dirge upon the vanity of human glory—not more truly was David exercised with all the diversities of religious experience that, as "the sweet singer of Israel," he might rise from the lowest note of penitential confession, through the entire gamut, to the highest note of pious rapture and joy—than does this patient Job lift himself out of the mist of those early times, with his dark form against the ages, the model of all human sufferers, the monument of God's providential discipline. The wildest fictions of Pagan poetry pale before the splendors of this actual martyrdom. Prometheus bound upon the rock, suffering the vengeance of the gods, is a tame conception beside this majestic sufferer; who, in the bitter wailings of a spirit crushed beneath accumulated woes, justified the ways of God and spake concerning Him the thing that was good. And of all the sayings which human piety has sanctified, not one sounds the depths of submission more than this of Job; when he draws his rent mantle over his head and worships Him by whom he was smitten, "Naked came I out of the womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord!"

But ye, whose hearts are sore with recent bereavement, need no homily from me upon the necessity and duty of submission, but rather to know what submission is. Listen, then, to the exposition of it in five particulars.

I. *It implies hearty acquiescence in the supremacy of God, as founded upon His proprietorship, and as directed by infinite wisdom and rectitude.* Three distinct propositions are here cumulated, all parts of one general idea—God's proprietorship, His supremacy grounded upon it, and the wisdom and goodness which direct its exercise. Each is deserving of notice in turn. God is our Creator, the Father of our spirits and the Framer of our bodies. He, in the beginning, formed man out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into him a living soul. However true it may be that the race is propagated, in successive generations from father to child—and whatever theories we may choose to adopt as to the creation or traduction of souls—no intervening instrumental agency can cloud the fact that in God alone we "live and move and have our

being." No right can be more absolute than that founded upon creation. The machine which you construct with your own skill, is your property. It is yours to improve and perpetuate it, or it is yours to annihilate and destroy. It is piracy to come in between you and your invention; the profits of which are secured by the patent which fixes the ownership in you, and protects you in the enjoyment of your franchise. God's proprietorship therefore in the creature is unquestioned. He made us; and we are His. He sustains and upholds; and in His providential care re-establishes the original claim, which is put forever beyond litigation. Job recognizes this: "the Lord gave"—it was in the exercise of sovereign right that He did so—and the right to give involves the right to withhold or to remove. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away:" the one and the other rest upon the same prerogative—and Job bows in the submission of worship, "blessed be the name of the Lord."

Ah! ye who suffer now, in the Lord's "taking away," do you recognize as well it was the Lord who "gave?" When your loved ones were with you, were ye happy in them? When, in the hour of weakness and pain and care, you leaned upon their strong affection and were comforted —when, in the moment of joy and hope, you felt the strange exhilaration of one soul's touch upon another soul—was the blessedness complete? Then, as you bowed before God in your closet, holding up this joy reflectively in your thought, the springs of gratitude were opened in the heart, and you thanked Him who "GAVE" it all. Shall not the remembrance of this past delight come to you now, in the night of your sorrow? How long you had it! Through ten, twenty, thirty, forty years, it was yours, by sovereign bestowment of Him who "GAVE." It is not for us, to whom life has been a charm, to murmur now when its bright spell is broken. It is not for us, who have had such large, deep draughts of the wine of love, to complain when we have drunk down to the dregs in the bottom of the glass. By the memory of all this joy, I summon you to submission. Let us not cancel the thanksgivings of the past, when gratitude rolled up its praises to the sovereign Giver of so many mercies, and smother it all in the fumes of present discontent. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." If we murmured not at the first, let us not repine at the second. It may touch you even more to suggest that it would be ungrateful to those whose love once brightened your earthly path, to cover the memory of that with the pall of fretfulness and complaint. Gratitude for the past abides, a well-spring of comfort in the dreariness of sorrow: and it is a gratitude due alike to our dear dead, and to God who "gave" them once as our joy.

But the human spirit is so constituted that it does not bend willingly to naked power. God has implanted within us the sense of justice, which feels the keenest resentment against wrong inflicted either upon ourselves or upon others. It is one of the attributes by which we reflect the divine image in which we were originally made. The sense of justice in us is but the echo of the justice which is in God, to which it makes its appeal under outrage and oppression; and it is this which causes even the day of judgment, with all its solemn terrors, to be welcomed as a day of vindication. I can give no exposition of the Gospel, with all its sweet restraint of human passion, which shall interfere with an honest and a holy indignation against sin and wrong, wheresoever perpetrated upon the earth. There is a righteous anger which these excite in the soul, dimly reflecting that felt in the bosom of the infinite Jehovah Himself. Even "under the altar are the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, doest thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth." [Romans vi, 9, 10.] It is necessary, therefore, to view the administration of divine Providence, not as the exercise of despotic and irresistible power simply, but as the government of a Being who is perfectly righteous and holy. We rise to a higher conception still, when we contemplate it as directed by unerring wisdom and goodness. The Stoic may bow before an irresistible fate, as the oak may bend before the blind fury of a tempest; but there is no intelligent submission in the one, more than in the other. But when the divine supremacy is seen to rest upon absolute right, and to be wielded with infinite rectitude, wisdom and goodness, all resistance is disarmed within the human soul. No feeling of injustice is aroused, quickening into resentment against despotic and overwhelming power; but true submission breathes forth its trust in the words, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" [Genesis xviii, 25]; "for he will not lay upon man more than right, that he should enter into judgment with God." [Job xxxiv, 23.]

My brethren, it must not be overlooked by us that, of all His prerogatives, God guards with holiest jealousy His supremacy. It cannot be otherwise, since there is none against which the creature is more likely to impinge. The creation of intelligent beings, with the high endowment of reason and of will, was the introduction of a stupendous problem into the government of God. The creation of a universe of material words, with the nice balancing of laws and forces within them, was nothing when compared with the peopling of these worlds with intelli-

gent races who should move freely in their sphere, in the consciousness of their full personality. How shall the autonomy of the creature be kept unimpaired under a dispensation of law and obedience? How shall the divine control be maintained, and the divine supremacy be unquestioned, whilst the spontaneity of the subject's will shall be unabridged as the foundation upon which its responsibility rests? And when sin lifted that will in insurrection against the authority which was supreme, how shall it be recovered to its old allegiance and yet maintain the majesty of the violated law? You see that we strike just here upon all the vast problems of providence and grace; which I have not sprung upon you with any view to their discussion, but simply to show the necessity that God should guard His own supremacy, in its relation to the lower wills which He has created. He will not suffer Himself even to be questioned. "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" [Daniel iv. 35.] He wraps the cloud about His throne, and makes the darkness His dwelling place. [Psalm xcvii, 2.] With sufficient reason for all His dealings with men, a reason which He will disclose to their approval hereafter, He folds the secret here in His own bosom that obedience may be rendered to His own will as supreme. Hence this hearty acquiescence in His holy supremacy is a necessary element in our submission—not, as with the mystic, a submission that consists in the abnegation of all will; but rather a consecration of that will, in its most conscious and most positive exercise, laid as an offering of sacrifice upon God's altar.

II. *Submission involves the entire committal of the untried future to God's providence and grace.* Severe sorrow tends naturally to the anticipation of evil. The very gloom which it casts into the soul, like the sombre twilight, distorts everything to the vision. Objects lose their proper outline and appear as spectres. The insecurity of earthly blessings clouds the enjoyment of them while they last. We have seen how slender is the thread upon which they hang, and how readily it snaps at the touch of fire. The consideration of the divine sovereignty itself, if it rise not to the highest view, may swell the apprehension into morbid dread. The sufferer finds himself confronted by a power terrible in its might, over which he has no control. The feeling is akin to that one has in the storm which is gendered by our summer heat, when the hoarse thunder shakes heaven and earth, and the fierce lightning gleams like a flash of splendor from the eternal throne. Who has not veiled his eyes before the flame which, in an instant, may scorch and burn him to a

crisp? I speak not of a guilty or a slavish terror; but of that awe deepest in those who are bravest, bowing before a majesty so supreme in its manifestation. Even so a spirit, crushed under bereavement, may contemplate that almighty will which, uncontrolled by aught save its own wisdom, suspends upon itself the destinies of the universe. Ah! we have need to draw lovingly near to this power, and to feel that it folds us within its covenant protection and care, if we would escape its dread.

There are temptations peculiar to sorrow. Sometimes the heart, bleeding in its severed ties, would choke its affections down, in the refusal to let them out upon those who are still left to the embrace. It may not be always in resentment of the blow already given. It may only be fright, in prospect of blows yet to fall. The quivering heart seeks to withdraw itself from exposure to the future. It would chill itself into torpor, which shall be insensible to the laceration of a new grief. Blessed be God, that the natural instincts of the soul are unconquerable—and most of all, this divine necessity to love even to the end! Blessed be God that, even in the desperation of grief, we cannot succeed in this harm to ourselves, of sealing up the fountain of affection; which will always burst through the crust of selfishness, and send forth its waters to make life glad and green once more!

Sometimes, again, in the morbid anticipation of evil, we try to measure our strength by arbitrary tests, and thus to gird it for the hour of trial. We create for ourselves sorrows which the Lord may never allot, and give to them a painful reality through a diseased imagination; and then we pass through the torture of the encounter in a strength which the Lord has not imparted. The strange madness seizes us—the very will-worship of grief—to multiply our woes, to exasperate our hearts with all conceivable penances, that we may acquire superlative endurance for afflictions that may never come. Oh! my brethren, this is not submission, but rank distrust of God, and resentment of His discipline. Submission is sweetly confiding. It lays the future in bulk upon the great Disposer. Having acquiesced in His rightful supremacy, it feels that the future, no less than the past, lies under its dominion. With a gracious frankness, it casts its apprehensions at the feet of the Redeemer; and leaves the untried future to be developed precisely after the divine plan.

"Thy will, my God, thy will be done,
And let that will be mine!"

III. *Submission implies that we take up at once the duties of life, in*

their proper discharge. There is oppression in sorrow. How heavy these grave stones lie upon the heart! Not heavier the earth upon the dead, than is this grief which like a nightmare sits upon the soul, repressing its energies. It is not only when memory rolls the past as a mighty burden upon us, that the pressure is felt. When thought is busy in the occupations of life, or when thought locks itself up in sleep, the dull ache is always there. The very air is heavy—it is labor to breathe. There is no light in the smile, for the sunshine has gone out of the heart. And when full consciousness returns of the oppression that is so constant, the struggling energies sink outright in the fatal collapse.

We yield to the seduction of grief. The past lives again, instinct with the old love. Fancy can weave no fictions of the future comparable with these solid reconstructions of the memory. We surrender ourselves to communion with it. We roll the old joys under the tongue, to taste their sweetness again In the contrast, the world appears so poor and commonplace. We turn from its insipidity, to hug the delights that have fled. Even their phantoms are more real to us, than the coarse forms of flesh and blood with which we have to deal. Then comes the stinging sense of loss. It is all gone from us, irrevocably gone. It is only the spectre we embrace; eternity and the grave hold all the rest; and the great agony is upon us, as at first. Can the heart let go its love? Ah, no! it is gathered up anew, and poured as a libation upon the tomb. The only tribute which can be offered to the dead, is the suffering which unappeased love feels, when it returns from its vain search for that which it once fed upon, famishing with its hunger. How can love indulge itself now, but in the sense of its loss? It takes revenge upon itself for even a momentary forgetfulness, by a spasm of remorse. There is a secret luxury in grief, in which for a season the heart revels. It has a soul in it, above the gaudy joys which would entice it back to the world that seems so empty.

The blessed Father above looks upon all this with a pity that is infinite. He "knows our frame, and remembers that we are dust." He will indulge us a little in the first access of severe bereavement. But He will not leave us to be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. After a season comes the whisper of gentle remonstrance. Life hath its duties still. It is not commonplace, since God has charged it with sacred trusts. "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." The heart, now mellow under the discipline, takes up its rejected burden once more, and with a chastened softness does its office to the living as well as to the dead. There can be no submission which does not recognize

the will to be *done*, as well as the will to be *endured*. The ghostly communion with the grave is surrendered: and with healthier thoughts we turn to life's earnest work, until the hour when we shall lay it as finished worship at the feet of our King.

IV. *In submission we nestle upon the bosom of our great Father, in close personal communion.* The sweetest benefit accruing from the discipline of sorrow, lies just here. "Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground." [Job v, 6.] They are appointed by One who stands very near to us in the disclosure of His will. We cannot evade the conviction of His personal attributes; for when we search into the reason of the dispensation, lo! this is locked in the secresy of His own counsel. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter" [John xiii, 7]; and we must wait until all mysteries shall be cleared up in the light of eternity.

But it is in the need we have for personal sympathy, we are most led up to God as a living Father. The wound has fallen upon the affections. Those who have been "taken away" were bound to us as persons; and the loss we sustain is that of their society and love. In the loneliness which succeeds, the whole world seems a desert. Who shall come in to occupy the vacant places? Worse than superfluous is the human sympathy which is wasted upon us: more than impertinent are the commonplaces of earthly condolence. Not till time shall have bevelled off the sharp edge of our sorrow, can we even tolerate the platitudes with which an inconsiderate kindness would beguile us from the grief which is love's last offering to the dead. By and by, we will listen to them and be strengthened, but not at first. If sympathy can avail, it must come from a Being who can take the full measure of our woe. Does not this explain why those soothe us most, who have drunk of the same cup and have tasted its bitterness? But the heart rushes beyond these. A man may know his own sorrow, but can he know mine? Ah! if we can only mount to God, there is sympathy commensurate with our anguish. He put within us these strong affections, and understands their capacity for suffering. He placed us in those tender relations, and weighed the joy they yielded to us. He knows the wrench, when the heart broke from its hold upon what was so dearly prized, and sit down to mourn upon the wreck of all its hopes. It is then the personality of God becomes to us a solid truth and a solace. The soul can make no appeal now to blind force, even though it be supreme. It does not want a God hidden behind the screen of His own laws, and powerless to control the wheels of the vast machinery He has created. It is a God with

affections and will, a God in personal relationship with the creatures He has made, a God who is a Father with a tenderness which yearns towards the suffering—it is such a God whom the weary soul seeks in the loneliness of sorrow.

Then, too, this God alone knows the reason of the affliction which He sends. And there is immense relief in nestling upon the bosom which contains the important secret. It is no blind venture. We hide beneath the shelter of His fixed and adorable purpose. The calamity, overwhelming as it appears, is within metes and bounds appointed by Him who knows just the limit at which it must stop. His sympathy, therefore, is assured to us, not only from His own goodness, but because it forms a part of His plan which requires that we shall be sustained to the end. How unspeakably precious, then, is the Gospel to all that mourn! It reveals not only a personal God, but that God in Christ—standing in covenant relations with His people, whom He has redeemed with blood, and whom He declares to be "his portion." Through the "one Mediator," Himself "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," we have easy access to this God as our Father. We nestle within His arms. It is His hand which wipes our tears, and it is His love that gives us double for all our sorrow.

V. *In submission everything gathers into worship.* This Job does. Anointed through suffering, he "binds the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar"—"BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD!"

It must be so with all who are truly submissive. We recognize, for example, God's right to vindicate His holiness in the exhibition of His grace. Can language express your gratitude for the grace through which you are saved? And is there an element of your experience more conspicuous than the deepening consciousness of your unworthiness in it all? The more grace accomplishes its work within us, the stronger is the conviction that to the end we are sinners still, saved alone through infinite and electing love. Are we not willing, then, that God shall through us display His holiness as well? The more overwhelming the proof to ourselves and to others that our names are written in the book of life, all the more is it right that God should make us witnesses to the truth that "he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity." [Habakkuk i, 13.] If this be through suffering, in which He testifieth against the sin yet cleaving to us, welcome be the privilege of proclaiming His holiness so unspeakably precious to those who hope to rejoice in that holiness forever. In our suffering we both submit and adore.

If, too, chastening be the badge of our sonship, then with the spirit of sons we endure and we worship. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" [Hebrews xii, 6 S] The law of family discipline is here explicitly announced. The suffering is sent in love: not the weak and partial love that "spares the rod"—but the wise and gracious love which looks to "our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." [Ibid., 10] How easy, then, to "kiss the rod" with which we are smitten, and how readily submission glides into worship!

And then there is heaven, which we more easily anticipate by the power of contrast. As one and another are released from earth to join the great company above, we lose the sense of our pain in living sympathy with their bliss. It is the pledge of release to ourselves, when He whom we love shall call for us to be where He is. The delightful hope brightens by the side of our gloom, as the star shines clearest upon the bosom of a dark cloud. It yields a note of praise in the song which trembles even upon the lips of sorrow.

There may be those here to-day to whom this discourse may not directly apply. Let such be patient with utterances that seem too sad. Bide your time. The days of darkness will come to you in their turn. Happy will it be for you, if the principles shall be already matured upon which you can fall back in your extremity. Perhaps the saddest feature of the world is, that it cannot profit except by experience of its own. With all its outlook upon the future, it seems hopelessly blind to the things that must come to all; and when the blow falls, it is girded with as little preparation as though warning had never been given.

But let the bereaved hearts, to whom these words are specially addressed, rejoice in the grace which plucks the sting out of their sorrow. In the submission which accepts it from the hand of a loving Father, they have learned the secret of its conquest. Even should they fall below the ideal which has been drawn, still it is much if the heart struggles toward its attainment. In the prayer for submission, the seeds of submission are already sown—and he who sincerely prays "thy will be done," will be able to add, "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

LI.

TRUST IN GOD'S NAME.

PSALM ix, 10: —"*They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.*"

In this brief sentence are three emphatic words. If we understand what is implied in *God's name*, and if we comprehend the *kind of knowledge*, as well as the *nature of the trust*, to which David refers, the whole meaning will be unlocked to us.

The ancient Fathers were wont to say that God was the only being who had no need of a name. By which they meant that, as He was singular and alone, a name was not required to distinguish Him from others. The conceit, however, is rather fanciful than solid. For if the Deity is to be known by His creatures, and especially if He is to be approached by them in loving communion, then must He be revealed by some title or titles which shall describe the properties of His being. Accordingly, the Scriptural names of God may be distributed into three classes: First, those which reveal Him in the *spirituality of His essence and in the mode of His subsistence*—that He is a Spirit, without body, parts or passions—infinite, eternal, unchangeable, omnipotent, omnipresent, self-sufficient—His essence uncompounded and indivisible—yet subsisting in a three-fold distinction of persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The names Jehovah, I am, He that was, and is, and is to come, all suggesting the ideas of self-existence and eternity, may be mentioned as illustrations of this class. Secondly, those which *disclose His moral perfections*—as a Being infinitely wise, holy, just, good, merciful and true. The bare existence of these terms among men, proves a God of whom they may be predicated in their highest sense. The fundamental distinction betwixt right and wrong which they imply, and which is the basis of all human morality and law, must be traced to the divine nature as its ultimate source. Such names as the Holy One, God, the Amen, with many others, belong to this class. Thirdly, those which *unfold His relations to us*, whether of law or grace—as Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, Ruler, Judge and Redeemer: making our obligations to

Him arise from the principles of gratitude, allegiance, accountability, from His property in us, and from His saving grace. The name of God is therefore the disclosure of Himself, as Being, as moral Being, and as sustaining to us moral relations.

It would be easy to support this exposition by reference to passages of Scripture, in which the name of God is identified with the revelation of Himself. There is, for example, the third commandment of the Decalogue, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain" [Exodus xx, 7]: where the essence of the sin of profane swearing consists in breaking this very association between the name and the perfections of Jehovah. See how this cuts away the apology so often uttered for this most senseless and useless of all sins, "the superfluity of naughtiness." No harm is intended, it is alleged, not even disrespect: God is not in the thought when His name is used—it is only an expletive, useless perhaps, but innocent. Why, this is the core of the offence, that God's awful name can be an expletive. He has made it the envelope, in which all His adorable perfections are wrapped. In breaking the association, which ought to be indissoluble, the name ceases any longer to suggest the Being whom it represents—and the swearer has done his best to annihilate his God. So in Exodus xxiii, 21, where Jehovah says of His angel whom He sent before Israel, "Beware of him and provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him." As the representative of God, he was invested with the authority of God. As this Angel of the Covenant was none other than the Christ of the New Testament [see I Cor. x, 4 9, and Hebrews iii, 8-10], the divine name stands clearly for the divine nature itself. Again, when Moses was put in the clift of the rock, the Lord proclaimed His name—which consisted in the enunciation simply of His glorious attributes: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." [Exodus xxxiv, 6, 7.] But not to multiply references, take the memorable prayer of David, "For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great" [Psalm xxv, 11]: the wonderful logic of which, the logic only of grace, consists in the appeal which is made to the nature and purposes of God, as "the God of pardons." We see then what is implied in God's name: it is God Himself revealed in the majesty of His being, in the glory of His perfections, in the sweetness of all His relations, and especially those of His gracious covenant.

The *knowledge* of this name is three-fold. It is, first, the knowledge

which comes to us through an *authoritative revelation.* Such a Being as the infinite Jehovah is beyond original discovery. The very terms I have employed in designating Him, settle this at once. Neither infinity nor self-existence comes within the limits of a creature's thought: and if either is to be known by actual exploration, where are the illimitable bounds ever to be overtaken? There is doubtless a capacity in man to receive the notion of God when it shall be communicated: but this is very different from originating the conception ourselves. The moral attributes of man are the points to which the revelation of a God may attach: and in the conscious possession of these we have, so to speak, the matrix in which the conception is moulded. Certainly, without the properties of wisdom, justice and truth in us, we could frame no ideas of these qualities as existing in another: and when this disclosure is made of these attributes in God, the power to receive the revelation lies in their resemblances as found in ourselves. It is mainly in this faint copy that the image of God consists, in which we were made. Is it too subtle a suggestion, that just here lies the explanation of that most expressive phrase, "the image of God?" The nature of man is a mirror which casts the reflection of God, when He presents Himself before it. But no mirror creates an image of itself. It always requires an object before it—its power is simply to *reflect.* Thus God discloses Himself: Man has properties, which are faint traces of his Maker—through which, as in a glass, he beholds God thus revealed.

It may possibly be urged that, if any moral resemblance obtains between the creature and the Creator, then man may ascend by this analogy from himself to the conception of the Deity. You may reason, that we have only to enlarge these qualities in us, and purge them of all imperfection, until they shall assume divine proportions and divine purity. Nothing is easier than to puncture the fallacy. Can you, by any amplification, transmute a shadow into the substance which casts it? Exaggerate the wisdom or the virtue of a creature to the utmost limit that human thought can reach, at that limit they stop—and you have but finite properties at last. A God cannot be created by any process at all. The Deity can only be revealed; and the glory of man is that, being made in the image of God, he is capable of receiving the disclosure. In singular proof of all this, observe how man, "not liking to retain God in his knowledge," has, through the blindness of sin, dealt with the notion after it was conveyed to him. He has taken the *whole* conception and broken it into innumerable parts. The moment he drifted away from the original revelation, and fell back upon his own mental re-

sources, he shattered the idea of "the one only living and true God" into myriads of fragments; and filled his Pantheon with "lords many and gods many," all of whom require to be put together to make up the solid notion of a God. And a little Sabbath scholar, who can intelligently repeat the answer to the fourth question of the Shorter Catechism, has a truer notion of the Supreme Being than all the sages of the heathen world.

But if it were possible to reach the divine by the transfiguration of the human, so at least as to generate the conception of God's nature and attributes, how can the creature arrive at the knowledge of God's thoughts? How shall he know the purposes of the Most High which depend upon the free determinations of His will? No human hand can lift the veil of secrecy from our own thoughts, which are known to others only by a voluntary disclosure. How hopeless the task of exploring the counsels of the Deity, so as to know Him in the character of His thoughts! The dependence of this upon a direct revelation will appear, the moment you consider the anomalies occasioned by the introduction of sin and grace. By what generalization shall the justice and the grace of God be harmonized in the treatment of the transgressor? How shall the truth, which has thundered out the penalty, be able to say "thy sins be forgiven thee?" Could we succeed then in building up the idea of the true God in the glorious assemblage of His attributes—in which all heathenism has failed—it remains to adjust the same in harmonious combination, the moment sin arises to throw them in antagonism. If the God of law can be developed from the contents of human consciousness, how shall these yield to us the God of grace? The admission of the one is the exclusion of the other: and it is God alone who can tell us how "he can be just, and yet justify the ungodly."

Secondly, it is a knowledge which comes by the *special illumination of the Holy Ghost.* Did we possess the integrity of nature in which we were first created, every discovery of the Deity would fill us with suitable emotions. His immensity would inspire awe; His holiness would impel to worship; His truth would beget trust; His goodness would generate love. Need it be told, after countless repetitions of the sad story, how sin has shattered and depraved these powers? I have compared that nature to a mirror which reflects God's glorious image: alas! how broken into fragments, and giving the image indeed, but distorted! Something more is needed than external revelation. The light shines in vain, if the eye is blind to its splendor. A divine power must remove the scales, and give ability to the sightless orb to receive the genial ray.

This is the office of the Holy Spirit, to illuminate the word which at first He inspired. By His mysterious influence the minds of prophets and apostles were quickened to perceive and to portray the great things which God would convey to man—and this influence is carried over into the work of illumination, through which the true meaning of Scripture is made to be understood. It is no part of my design to explain the mystery in either case. Indeed, you well know that all the operations of this blessed Person of the Godhead can be known only as to the reality of the fact, but not as to the method of accomplishment. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." [John iii, 8] But evidently there is an ordained connection between the authorship of the Word by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and the saving explication of that Word by His illumination—a sort of continuance of the revealing power from the one into the other, just as there is a continuance of the original creative energy in the constant and upholding providence of the Almighty. Yet mysterious as may be this blending of the Spirit's agency with all the spontaneous action of our own faculties, every Christian knows that God's truth is most powerfully and directly borne in upon his understanding and heart—and that there is a divine gift of power to behold God in the Scriptures. The holiness of God, for example, is not only revealed as an attribute of His nature, but the beauty of that holiness is seen and felt. The distinction is apprehended at once in the sphere of sense. A landscape may be viewed by one who takes in only the different parts which compose it; but the exquisite loveliness of that landscape is felt only by him whose eye can trace the harmonious relation of the parts to the whole. What a strange beauty there is in our blessed God, when the Holy Spirit pours a single beam of His light into the soul! Alas! how often is that beauty hidden from us, when darkness rests upon the very text which reveals it!

But this almost anticipates the third mode of knowledge, which comes from *the experience of the truth* in its power within us. The attributes of God are not dormant perfections, put merely on exhibition to attract admiration and praise. They are active principles of His nature, which have their outworking in all the procedures of providence and grace. His wisdom, goodness and power, in their essential activity, called the universe into being. His justice, holiness and truth take hold of the creature in the province of law, and have their historical development in his career both of obedience and of sin. His mercy, pity and love are

just as potential in the sphere of grace, working out the redemption and salvation of the lost, and preparing for them a happier destiny in the kingdom of glory. It is one of the sad delusions of the wicked, that they dream of God as at rest. They transform His forbearance into quietude, and are bold in sin because His thunder is hushed. Even the righteous are tortured with unnecessary fears, because they forget "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." "The Lord's throne is in heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men.' [Psalm xi, 4.] All, therefore, that God's name implies, breaks forth in' the experience of His people. They have a practical knowledge of His grace in the redemption of their souls—of His mercy, in the forgiveness of their sins—of His righteousness, in the acceptance of their persons—of His love, in the tokens of His favor—of His holiness, in the sanctification of their lives. "God is in them, of a truth:" and they cannot but know Him in His perfections, which are so operative within them "in bringing forth the fruits of righteousness." Of course, this knowledge deepens daily. "Then shall we know," says the Prophet, "if we follow on to know the Lord." [Hosea vi, 3.] And this "following on" is precisely the characteristic feature of a true Christian experience With all its retardations and retrocessions, there is movement forward to the end. With each enlargement of knowledge, there is increased capacity for higher attainments. Knowledge builds upon knowledge—until, even on earth, the believer gains a height which yields a boundless view of the glories which are wrapped within the name of His Redeemer God.

The *trust*, described in the text, calls for but a word of explanation. It is simply the soul's *repose upon God* in His all-sufficiency. But you will notice the conscious agency of the saint in reference to it. "They that know thy name, *will put* their trust in thee." However it may spring irrepressibly from the confidence which that holy name inspires, there is a solemn consecration of the soul to God in covenant trust. It is a high act of worship in which Jehovah is honored. You may call it an instinct of faith, if you please, looking upon it from the side of creaturely weakness issuing in this creaturely dependence. But none the less is it the energy of a sanctified will, which balances itself upon the power and faithfulness of God so that it cannot be moved. The direction which this trust will take is determined by the character of the necessity that presses. If temporal blessings are needed, the trust will be reposed in God's providence and bounty, as these are covered by His promise. If the pressure arise from a sense of ignorance, the trust will

rest in the divine wisdom for instruction. If it be the sense of guilt weighing upon the conscience, the trust will be in God's grace to pardon. If it be a conviction of vileness, the trust will be in God's holiness to purge from the last stain of sin. If again it be the crush of bereavement and sorrow, the trust will be in God's love to "give beauty for ashes, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Diversified as the wants may be, God's name is a fountain from which the supply may be drawn. Is it wonderful that they who know the name, should put their trust in its "fulness of blessing?"

With this rapid exposition of the terms of the text, we see exactly what David means to affirm: that *a special discovery of God's perfections, as summed up in His name, is the necessary antecedent of Christian trust.* The little I have to say, in advance of what has been already discursively presented, will be distributed under three topics.

1. *The disclosure of the divine fulness is usually proportioned to the discovery of our own emptiness.* God's way of dealing with His creatures is to excite a sense of want prior to its relief. A truism seems to lurk in the very terms; for nothing is relief which does not meet antecedent distress. Nevertheless, it is worth a moment's consideration. Before the creation of Eve, God caused the animals to defile in pairs before Adam, in acknowledgement of their subjection to his authority. But the sight of their society in contrast with his solitariness, awoke within Him the craving of an help-meet. With this developed want came the deep sleep, in which the rib was taken from his side and builded into the woman: and out of the depth of his satisfied desire sprang the welcome with which the first father greeted his bride beneath the arbors of Eden—"This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man." [Genesis ii, 23.] But why should I travel back to the beginning for an illustration of the principle, when we have it here in the appetites of our own bodies? What is hunger and thirst and the drooping of the eyelid in sleep, but so many admonitions from God to replenish the waste of our frames? Food stands over against hunger, but it is hunger that gives relish to food. The want and the supply go together, but the want comes first and cries for its fellow

The correlation obtains in religion as well: and this gives you the whole law-work of the Spirit in conviction for sin, before that Spirit opens the eye to behold the sin-bearer upon the cross. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" [Matthew ix, 12]: and the sense of sickness is that which drives us to the healing. When

the law discovers the enormity of our guilt in sinning against claims which are so perfect and just, the conscience trembles before the righteousness of the condemnation under which we lie. When the Spirit unfolds the dreadful purity of the Being from whom we have revolted, the shame experienced in view of the pollution and vileness of sin, causes us to wilt in His presence, and to say, with Job, "We abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes." There is nothing meritorious in all this sense of guilt and shame, any more than in the sense of hunger and thirst. The sooner the sinner can put away this delusion and cease to build a righteousness out of his remorse, the better for his safety and comfort. Hunger tells us that we need food; and these painful operations of the conscience tell us that we need pardon and cleansing. They are only the condition of soul in which we receive and enjoy the pardon; and both alike are the gracious gift of God. When this law-work has been accomplished by the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of conviction, we are in the state to appreciate the revelation which He makes of the Savior whose "blood cleanseth from all sin." Now it is the contrast between our own necessities and the complete salvation provided in the Gospel, which draws out the soul's entire trust in the God of all grace. To see our sin only, is to despair: to see the fulness of mercy which is revealed in the name of God, is to trust and be saved. With such precision do our Standards incorporate this as an element of repentance, distinguishing it from "the sorrow of the world which worketh death:" "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and *apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ*, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience."

2. *The trust in God is exclusive, all things else being viewed under Him simply as means.* Here is the line which separates trust from presumption. Our folly is constantly throwing us upon one or other of two extremes. Either we rest upon instrumental agencies, and forget God who works through them; or we cast ourselves indolently upon His care, and expect the interposition of a supernatural providence. The law of that providence is "if any would not work, neither should he eat." [II Thess. iii, 10.] "Whoso keepeth the fig-tree, shall eat the fruit thereof." [Proverbs xxvii, 18.] And the law of grace is, "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." [Isaiah xl, 31.] In either kingdom alike, the drone is expelled; and "the hand of the diligent maketh rich." [Proverbs x, 4] But the two are beautifully combined, the trust in God and the use of means, since the latter are

mere channels through which God distributes His sovereign bounty. Our industry and thrift simply bring us into co-operation with Him who blesses labor with its fruits. The laws of nature are simply the uniform methods by which His power acts. With this subordination in view, there is perfect trust in the divine goodness and power, with the most diligent use of our own faculties. It is but drawing from the divine fulness, through the ordained channels. Is it not for this God so often defeats our schemes, that we may learn the extent of our dependence, and give Him the glory of all that we achieve? The friction of life largely ceases when we "labor working with the hands the thing which is good," and at the same time look to "the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift."

3. *This trust is yielded when we read this name of God written upon the person and work of Jesus Christ.* In the Redeemer alone are we able to see the perfections of God in their complete harmony, and to behold the Deity at once in all His relations. How shall we know the full truth about God as the Creator, unless we read that "by Him (Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or principalities or powers —all things were created by Him and for Him?" [Colossians i, 16] How should we understand the whole doctrine of providence, unless we had heard Jesus say, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth?" [Matthew xxviii, 18.] And what could we know of God as the God of grace, were it not for the testimony that we are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God?" [Romans iii, 24, 25.] It is in Christ alone, and in His adorable work, we see the attributes of God in the sweetness of their co-operation to secure the salvation of the sinner. In Him "mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." [Psalm lxxxv, 10.] Law blends its majesty with the softness of grace in the person of Jesus, and the God of holiness is seen to be the God of love. He is the angel of the covenant, of whom Jehovah speaks, "My name is in him." We are not driven then to spell that name, letter by letter and syllable by syllable, from the objects of nature. Beautiful as the types are, with which it is printed upon the parchment of the sky—exquisite as may be the enamelling of it upon the face of the green earth—it is written in larger and plainer copy upon the form

of Him "who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person."

Through Him, too, as "the Mediator of the new covenant," we approach with adoring trust the Majesty upon which we would else be afraid to look. The name of God—the great and dreadful name, at which angels tremble—is written for us upon the person of our blessed Savior and Head. We place our hands lovingly in His; and He lifts them up so gently and yet so strongly, and places them upon His Father's throne.

My brethren, here is the secret of Christian comfort. It springs right out of trust. It is of the nature of a creature to find support from that on which it leans. It is the contradiction of its instinct to seek independence of its Maker. God stretches out His mighty arm, and the universe hangs upon it. What madness to expect repose upon anything short of almighty power and love! Everything else is created, like ourselves. The wealth, the grandeur, the honors of the world, vanish like the mist of the morning. The hand that grasps at these, closes only upon air. But God abides. He is from everlasting to everlasting. The soul which rests upon Him, rests upon the eternal and the true.

But trust cannot be compelled. It must be drawn out by the object which deserves it. If God hide Himself in the thick cloud, the soul flutters upon its weary wing, seeking rest and finding none. But when the light shines upon His name, the soul nestles in it among the glorious perfections which give it rest forever. Jacob's prayer to the wrestling angel becomes then our prayer, "Tell me, I beseech thee, thy name.' And the name shall be told us, when "he blesses us there."

LII.

THE GREAT SALVATION.

HEB. ii, 3: —"*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation.*"

Some questions in the Bible, in the solemnity of their utterance, sound from the depths of the Eternal World. For example, this: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?—or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark viii: 36, 37.) Or this: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?" (Heb. x: 28, 29) It is the voice from the Judgment Seat, determining the value of the soul in the light of Eternity, and proclaiming the guilt of finally rejecting the Gospel of the grace of God. It is remarkable that all these questions address themselves to the reason, not less than to the conscience—to the judgment, not less than to the fears, of men. In the text, the argument turns upon the *greatness* of the offered salvation: the obligation to embrace which is determined by the greatness of the peril, and by the magnitude of the grace which was required to meet it. In either view, the appeal is irresistible; as we shall see by dwelling upon it a little in detail.

1. *The salvation is great, in the originality and grandeur of its conception.* It is entirely aside from the sphere of law, and could never be deduced by any process of the natural reason. Indeed, law rather excludes, than suggests, the possibility of pardon to the transgressor. It realizes the idea of justice, not of mercy. Its function is to prescribe and to enforce duty; and, upon the event of transgression, has no office but to judge and to condemn. It can make no antecedent provision for the immunity of an offender, without in so far relaxing its own claim and abdicating its supremacy. Any such premonition of mercy would

be self-destructive. It would pervert the law, so as to make it seduce into sin, rather than restrain from its commission. The slightest hint as to the remission of the penalty, would offer a premium upon rebellion; and law would defeat its own end.

When therefore salvation is offered to the lost, the very conception is as original as it is magnificent. Only God could know whether there were any resources of grace, lying back of law; or whether it lay within the scope of His purpose to bring these to bear upon the sinner's case. It is exclusively a Divine thought, which could never have entered within the circle of human ideas if it had not been communicated from above. So emphatically true is this, that the apologist for Christianity might safely rest its whole defence upon this fundamental fact, that it announces a method of salvation under a government of law. The taunt is often thrown out, if the Gospel be from God why is not the evidence so obtrusive as to be irresistible? We claim that it is so, in every instance where the eye is not obstinately closed against the light in which that evidence is conveyed. And we love to bring into view those broad, grand facts which lie at the heart of this system, and which are inexplicable upon any other supposition than that its origin is divine. Here is one of them. Man is of necessity a subject of law. You cannot think him otherwise. Every term, by which you define him, places him under its jurisdiction. Every quality, or power, which you ascribe to him, requires the law as the sphere of its operation. Give him intelligence—that puts him under law. Give him affections—these require both guidance and restraint. Give him the power of choice, and his will needs a perfect standard by which its decisions shall be regulated. Change his external conditions as often as you please, and carry him into never so many worlds, so long as his nature remains essentially unchanged, so long must he abide under law. And yet this law, from which you cannot even in thought extricate him, shuts the transgressor up to the doom he has incurred, and breathes not the faintest whisper of hope into his ear. But here is the Gospel which not only proclaims the possibility of pardon, but unfolds the method by which it is accomplished; and through the whole process man's original and necessary relation to the law is preserved intact. Here is something marvellous: salvation is revealed, of which the law could not convey the first hint; and yet its supremacy is not simply unimpaired, but is actually upheld. From whom could such a system be derived, but God? And the possibility of grace under a government of law—of grace that does not annihilate law—why the very combination of the

terms gives you the proof that the Gospel is of God. It is only with Him the conception could have originated, and He alone had the resources with which to work out the mighty paradox.

2. *It is a "great salvation," in the righteousness upon which it depends.* Look at the hopelessness of the dilemma. Man, as a sinner, is devoid of all righteousness; and yet, as a creature under law, he can not be saved without it. Both these facts should be duly considered. So long as he remains under the empire of law, the necessity for a perfect obedience cannot be dispensed with. No method of grace can be devised, which can interfere with this original supremacy of the law. How then is the sinner to be saved, who is acknowledged in terms to be wholly destitute of the righteousness which the law demands? Of course, it must be provided for him, in some way to us utterly inconceivable; and it must, in some way equally beyond our discovery, be made as completely his own as though it had been wrought singly by himself. These are the conditions of the problem which the Gospel undertakes to solve. We have already considered the originality of the thought, which places these things together; we are now to be astonished at the grandeur of the Righteousness, upon which this salvation turns. It is a righteousness which God claims, in a true sense, as His own. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: * * * to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii: 21, 22, 26) In like manner, the Apostle, in another epistle, repudiates his own righteousness that he may accept, in lieu thereof, the righteousness of God: "And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil. iii: 9.) The contrast between the two is drawn with still greater emphasis, in these words: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God; for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. x: 3, 4.)

Who, that takes in the compass of the thought, is not oppressed by the majesty of the utterance? God, in His mercy, will save the guilty; in His holiness, He will save them through a righteousness; and be-

cause there is no other which will meet the exigencies of the case, He provides them with His own. In what sense this is true, we shall presently have occasion to see. Just now, your attention is challenged only to the fact that God claims the righteousness as His own, by which the sinner is justified and saved. It is not a merely human righteousness, without merit as only rising to the measure of human obligation: but a righteousness which is furnished by Jehovah Himself, which rises to the level of His own majesty and to the measure of His own infinite perfections, the full exposition of His own justice, holiness, goodness and truth. Alas! for the blindness which can be insensible to the grandeur of such a disclosure! Even though we had never been informed as to the details of the scheme, it should be enough to sweep away all distrust that God proposes to save the guilty by a righteousness not less august than His own. A more glorious foundation cannot be laid for the salvation of any creature, than to invest him with "the righteousness which is of God, by faith." And nothing so reveals the inveteracy of sin, as the fact that the splendor of the thought does not fascinate the mind, and that the graciousness of the offer does not win the affections. The last wonder of earth is that the glory of God, in this offered salvation, does not at once burn out all the opposition of the human heart.

3. *The greatness of this salvation is further seen, in the method by which it was achieved.* Our familiarity with the fact takes off the edge of our wonder. We can none of us go back to the moment, when it was not to us "the old, old story;" consequently, it has never broken over us with the freshness of surprise. Yet there are moments of reflection, when the scheme of grace looms up before us in the grandeur of its proportions; and in view of its stupendous mysteries, we can only exclaim, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Endeavor, my hearers, to strip yourselves of all prepossessions upon this subject. Put yourselves, as far as you can, in the condition of those to whom the announcement is made for the first time. Take up the problem, before grace gives to you the solution. In your bewilderment, assemble in one grand Senate all intelligent beings throughout the Universe, and let their united wisdom return an answer to these two questions—How shall God furnish His righteousness to the creature, and how shall it become so the property of the creature as to fulfil the obligation of obedience under which he lies? When we have fully measured the difficulties in the way of a sinner's salvation,

we will be better able to bow before "the great mystery of Godliness God manifest in the flesh." How shall the Infinite Being, from whose nature the law flows as its source, come under its provisions and submit to its control? The answer can be found only in the Incarnation of the Son of God: for "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John i: 14.) "The ministry of reconciliation" delivers its message in these words, "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (II Cor. v: 19.)

But see how mystery is folded within mystery. You cannot take up that of the Incarnation, until you have entered within the pavilion and viewed the deeper mystery of God's threefold subsistence in one undivided essence. It is this distinction of Persons, that renders possible the distribution of offices in the scheme of Grace upon which its efficacy depends. By virtue of this, the Father sends the Son, gives to Him the commission upon which as Mediator He acts, receives the work of obedience which He renders on the sinner's behalf, and reckons this to the latter as the ground of his salvation. It is by virtue of this same Personal distinction, that the eternal Son becomes the substitute for the guilty and dies for them under the curse;—that He rises and ascends to Heaven, as their Head, and administers the grace which in His priesthood He has purchased. As the Son of God, the righteousness, which He shall achieve for the sinner, is truly "the righteousness of God." But then the supreme difficulty remains, how shall this Divine Person come under the law to obey it—and if He does, how shall this be made in any sense the righteousness of the Creature? Evidently, He must come under the law; and the obedience is of no avail, unless rendered in the nature which had sinned Comprehend then, if you can, the mystery of the Redeemer's Person, as the two poles of being are brought together in Him. Measure, if you may, the angle of these two planes, the Divine and the Human, as their edges touch in Him: so that without mixture, or overlapping, each nature shall have scope for its own action, without interference from either side. Well may the Apostle exclaim with reference to it, "Great is the mystery of Godliness," by which the attributes of the Infinite are united with the limitations of the finite—by which the glory and the power of the Divine are shed upon the suffering and the submission of the Human, and the obedience of the Human is clothed with the merits of the Divine, as both meet in the one person to whom they both belong.

Even this is not all. How shall the "Word be made flesh?" It is easy to see how the human body of Christ might have been created, as the body of Adam was fashioned of the dust. But in that case, our Lord would have sustained no kinship with the race whom He came to redeem; there would have existed no natural relation upon which the right of redemption could have fastened. He must be *born* a man; falling, by inheritance of their nature, within the race whom He desires to save—furnishing thus a basis for His moral relations to us as a covenant Head and a vicarious Sacrifice. Yet in this case, how shall the entail of the first Sin be estopped from Him; so that He shall not be born under the guilt, which would ensure to Him the same depravity of nature as accrues to us? Could human imagination dare to portray the solution of this problem given in the words of the Angel to the Virgin of Nazareth, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i: 35.) In this supernatural conception of our Lord's Humanity in the womb of a virgin, we understand why in the very first promise the Savior should be so distinctly announced as "the Seed of the Woman." In all these features of the plan by which the august Being works out this righteousness of God, so as to be yet our righteousness—we discover the greatness of the salvation to which the text refers.

4. *It is not less great, in the completeness of its parts.* These are two—the external, in justification—the internal, in sanctification. It would not be salvation, unless both these were included; and they are connected by the logic of the Divine holiness itself. If God bring Himself under obligation to deliver from the penalty of the law, He is equally under obligation to deliver from that which necessitates the penalty. He cannot finally emancipate from the curse, without releasing also from the sin which compels the curse. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"—this is the language of the law, binding sin and death together indissolubly forever. It is not enough therefore to ward off the penalty, which threatens from without: it is equally necessary to cleanse the soul from the defilement and stain of sin, as these are found within. As the one involves the whole *redeeming* work of the Son, so does the other embrace the whole *renewing* work of the Spirit. The darkened understanding must be enlightened, the perverted affections must be reclaimed, the evil conscience must be purged, the enslaved will must be made free, the dominion and power of sin must be broken, its pollution

must be washed away, and the whole spiritual nature must be recovered to holiness and to God.

The germ of all this is the principle of holiness, planted in the soul in the moment of the New Birth: which by the law of all life expands and bears fruit, until every faculty of the Believer's nature is brought supremely under the power of grace which pervades it. Sanctification of the whole soul developes out of the new life in regeneration, just as the line is generated by a moving point upon a sheet of paper. The power which is exerted by the Holy Ghost in the first communication of spiritual life, needs only to be continued in the same direction in order to produce all the graces which mark an advanced degree of holiness. The change wrought in the new birth, deepens and expands in the progressive sanctification of the soul. The salvation then is complete, which takes hold of the great needs of the sinner, both as he is guilty and depraved—which not only confers upon him a pardon that is free, but works within him a life that is eternal. And whoever will combine in his thought these two factors of the "great salvation"—the justification of the sinner under a perfect law, and the renewal of his nature through birth of the Holy Ghost—will find in these the two pillars which support the entire weight of the Gospel as a system, coming alone from God.

5. *It is the great salvation, in the end at which it aims.* As wrought in the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost, it is something already possessed; but it is not carried in this world to its final stage. In the two features which have been considered, salvation is a present experience with every true christian: there is deliverance from the curse of the law, in the judicial acceptance of his person, in Christ, before God—and there is the purification of his whole nature at least begun, in the work of sanctification by the Holy Ghost. The third element in this salvation remains to be experienced in the world to come. Grace must issue in glory, as the river disembogues into the sea. Imputed righteousness in justification, and implanted righteousness in sanctification—the glory of the Redeemer's work on the one hand, and the glory of the Spirit's agency on the other, must combine their splendors before the Father's throne above. So far as it is yet future, it is the object of hope. Says the Apostle, "We are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, than do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. viii: 24, 25.) The greatness of the salvation cannot be fully known this side of Heav-

en. We may partly know what we are *saved from*, by the conviction of sin wrought within us by the Holy Ghost: and we may partly know what we are *saved to*, by the joys which flow from a sense of God's love as reconciled in Jesus Christ. But we cannot fully appreciate either, until we stand amidst the realities of the eternal world. "It doth not yet appear," says the Apostle John, "what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (I John iii: 2.) It would require the dialect of Heaven to describe the glory of Heaven: and therefore the Holy Spirit does not attempt to portray it to mortals upon earth. If this future salvation should include nothing more than confirmation in holiness forever, beyond the reach of temptation and apostacy any more, this were enough. If it lift us above the plane of mere subjects under law, to the highest summit level a creature can reach, the walking with God in the freedom of a glorified sonship forever—this is a blessedness unspeakably great. What more may lie in the unmeasured depths of that joy of Christ which is to be "fulfilled in us," we must wait to see.

Such is the greatness of the salvation which the Apostle makes the hinge of his argument in the text. And is there not, my hearers, an almost unspeakable pathos in the reproach which lies in the word "neglect?" Can it be true, as seems to be implied, that most of those who fail of the "great salvation," do it through sheer neglect? Alas, that a scheme, so fully disclosing to us the infinite resources of God, should be suffered by such vast multitudes of our race to go by default! Let us see how this strange and fatal mistake comes to be committed.

First of all, many are so engrossed with the cares and duties of this life, that the interests of the soul secure only the most insufficient and intermittent attention. The saddest view in all this world is to see the vast majority of men, in every generation, struggling barely to exist. Poverty toils through its allotted hours, just to get bread enough to live until the next day's necessity shall bring back the next day's labor. Is it strange that, in this dire conflict with starvation and want, the next world should be postponed to the more immediate cares of this? Even with the more favored children of fortune, how complete is the dominion of sense! How easily this poor world obtrudes itself upon us, rushing through the five gateways which give it access to the soul! Until at last in the final judgment, we can give only this lame excuse for the loss of the soul which God has committed to us as our supreme trust,

"while thy servant was busy here, and there, he was gone." (I Kings xx: 40.)

Again, to most unconverted persons, practical religion wears a forbidding aspect, in its first stages of conviction and repentance. It is not pleasant to have the covering of self-complacency and pride suddenly torn away, and to discover that we are vile. The flattery of sin must be exposed sooner or later; but the shame of the exposure overwhelms the spirit whenever it is made. Men naturally turn away from its contemplation, as they do from the evidence of approaching bankruptcy—or as those, who labor under mortal sickness, shrink from the nauseous medicine which would bring relief and cure. It cannot be doubted that this is to be numbered among the causes of the speedy aversion with which multitudes put the Gospel aside and perish in their sin.

Add to this, the want of courage in stemming the tide of worldly influence and example. Doubtless the charge will be bitterly resented: for of nothing is man more ashamed than of this cowardice of which he is the most guilty. It is amazing what amount of painful conviction many persons will inwardly bear, before they can be induced to turn squarely in their track and face the world with an honest confession of previous error and sin. Usually the controversy is closed on every side, as soon as the decision is proclaimed "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." But so long as men wilt under the benumbing fear of human society, so long will the "great salvation" be pretermitted.

Finally, there remains in the heart a lurking scepticism that, after all, God is not so holy, or severe in His justice, as He is described. It is so easy to substitute a false standard in place of the true, and to reason from the partial vindication which God makes of His government in this life. And thus, under the influence of that steady aversion from God which belongs to the carnal heart, men conclude to live just as they please, and to *take the chances* for the world to come. Oh, my hearers, eternity is too long, and the soul is too vastly precious, to risk either upon a hazard like this. God has left us in no uncertainty as to His character, or as to the principles of His government over man: and consequently there are no "chances" in the case. He that closes his eyes upon what Divine Revelation makes so certain, rushes upon a doom which is known with a most fearful precision. Yet with insane presumptuousness, men stake the soul upon the cast of the die, with the certainty of its loss registered against them.

With what emphasis the question of the text falls now upon the ear, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Most clearly, it was devised to meet an alarming exigency; and if it be declined, we remain under the power and curse of the law, from which this affords the only escape. Has not the sinner contracted, also, a two-fold guilt? If before he was condemned for an offence against law, is he not doubly condemned for this offence against grace? If there was a necessity that God should vindicate the first, must He not equally uphold and glorify the last? My unconverted hearer, the form of the question is intended as the most positive and pronounced of all statements. There can be no escape, if we neglect this salvation offered to us in the Gospel. Its very grandeur and completeness establish the fact that there can be no other. God has put into it His own resources, and this is the only alternative. And may God forbid, that the weight of this rejected Gospel should rest upon you in the day of final condemnation!